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BLANCHE BERTRAND;

OR,

PERILS OF THE BORDER.

BY EMERSON BENNETT.

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CHAPTER IV.

THE IMPRISONED VOYAGERS.

Eugene Fairfax turned ghastly pale, and fairly reeled, as the words of Seth Harper, and the terrific yells of the Indians, with an almost paralyzing effect, fell upon his ear.

"Merciful God!" he gasped; "it is what I feared! My worst forebodings are realized."

"Secure the passage!" cried Blanche, turning suddenly upon the boatmen, and speaking in a firm, commanding tone—her beautiful features assuming on the instant an expression of power that Eugene had never before witnessed—her face becoming a shade paler, her lips sternly compressing, her fair brow slightly gathering, and her naturally soft blue eyes brightly gleaming with the same fiery spirit which animated the Spartan heroines of other days.

Her command—for such it was, rather than a request—was promptly obeyed; the door, opening from the body of the boat to the open part of the bow, being instantly closed and barred by Dick Winter, who happened to be standing nearest to it.

"Now, then," said Blanche, resuming her natural tone, "you can deliberate upon the emergency at your leisure; and if you are true to yourselves, the Indians will scarcely enter here without paying dearly for their temerity."

Saying this, she handed the light to Eugene, and, quietly retiring into her own apartment, closed the door behind her. For a few moments—as if amazed at the perfect coolness and presence of mind of one so gently formed and delicately molded, so tenderly reared and carefully nurtured—of one who, under such alarming circumstances, might legitimately have shrunk back in terror and dismay—the young commander stood, light in hand, motionless as a statue, his eyes riveted upon the point where her graceful figure had disappeared from his view. Then, as if suddenly recollecting himself, and half ashamed of his own want of forethought and decision of action, he turned quickly to the boatmen—whose rough, bronzed features alike expressed surprise and admiration—and demanded the particulars of what had happened.

"Ah! me! poor Tom!" sighed Seth Harper, in reply; "I didn't think when he went over in that thar fog, onto that thar infernal bank o' mud, that he'd be a goner so soon. But then that's the way with the best o' us—it mought even hev been me instead!"

"But the facts! the facts!" impatiently demanded Eugene.

"Wall, you see, Cap'n—for we kin see a little in here, ef we couldn't out thar—the facts I'm coming to. Yes, you see, as nigh's I can make it out, it war about this way: Tom Harris, you see—wall, you did see, or rayther you knowed—had got over the bow, to feel, as he said, the lay of the land like—though it's not like he feels much now, as he lays on the land——"

"For Heaven's sake," interrupted Eugene, "do stop your jesting!—or else stop your story altogether!"

"Good gor-a-mighty!" exclaimed Seth, in real or affected amazement—"ef you calls that thar jesting, Cap'n, over poor Tom's scalp like, I'm done! I war telling the facts, and telling 'em p'inted; but it's like Dick, here, will tell you better—for he's longer-winded and a bigger blower nor me. Here, Dick, jest tell the Cap'n what you knows about poor Tom and the red niggers, and don't tell him nothing else 'cept he axes ye."

Thus being called upon, Dick Winter proceeded to state that his unfortunate companion had got over the bow of the boat, and, by taking hold of the bushes, and feeling carefully, had found a safe place for his feet; that he had informed his friends that, though the bank was low, and the ground rather swampy, he thought he could safely grope his way round so as to ascertain the turn or bend of the river; and that while apparently in the act of doing this, he had been heard to give a yell of surprise, and then one of pain, accompanied with the declaration that the savages had suddenly seized and stabbed him.

This was really all the two boatmen knew of the matter—for, as already sufficiently stated, it was too dark to discern any object—and they had instantly hurried below, to give the alarm, and take what measures they could for the safety of all.

"Poor Tom!" returned Eugene, gloomily and sympathetically; "he has met a fate that may soon be ours."

"Yes, poor Tom! jest as I said myself," chimed in Seth Harper, with a doleful air. "We're a heap better off nor him now, arn't we?—for we're alive and kicking, and he ain't; and we've got a chance to fight, and he hasn't."

"Is everything secure?" demanded Eugene.

"All right and tight, I reckon," replied Seth; "and here we is, like rats in a trap, with the hell-hounds barking all round us."

"It is terrible!" groaned Eugene, advancing along the passage, to what was termed the midships of the boat, where there was a small, open space, which answered the purpose of a general mess-room and sleeping apartment.

A word of explanation may here be proper. We have previously stated that there was a passage running lengthwise through the boat. This passage was not formed by regular partitions, but by the disposition of the freight—bales, boxes, and barrels being stowed away on either hand, except at the part already mentioned in the center, which

SETH HARPER'S PRIZE.

was left vacant for a space of some six or eight feet square. This open space—room it could not properly be termed—contained a slab-table, two or three rude benches, a few cooking utensils, and various garments suspended from wooden pegs along the sides. Overhead, supported by buck-horn hooks, depending from the naked cross-beams of the deck, were three or four rifles, with powder-horns, bullet-pouches, and wallets attached; and on the floor was now spread a large straw mattrass, from which the two boatmen had been roused and summoned on deck by Eugene—one of them, alas! as subsequent events proved, to return no more.

On either side of the passage referred to, near the bow, was a small cabin—the one on the left being occupied by Blanche and her female servant—and the one on the right, more rudely constructed, by Eugene solely. Each of these cabins had a small window, or opening, about a foot square, which could be closed at pleasure by a sliding panel within; similar ones looked out from either side of the space occupied by the boatmen, and there was one likewise in the stern; all of which were well calculated to serve as port-holes in case of an attack, but neither of them of sufficient capacity to admit of the ingress or egress of the body of a grown person. In fact, save a large trap-door in the center of the deck, the only means of entrance or exit was through the door near the bow, which we have already seen closed and barred by the order of Blanche.

Everything within and around was, of course, rude and inelegant—the boat having been constructed with a view to freight, rather than the convenience of passengers; but it had great strength—the planks covering its stout frame-work were bullet proof and well secured—and this to our voyagers, in their present condition, was a matter of far greater importance than mere symmetry and beauty.

Setting the light on the slab-table, Eugene threw himself upon a seat beside it, and rested his head upon his hand, with the air of one painfully affected and oppressed by the critical position in which he found himself placed. Reason told him he should not reflect upon himself; and yet he could not avoid the thought, that, had he taken the advice of the boatmen, and run over to the Kentucky shore, matters might have been better now.

"But no human being," he muttered, half aloud, with something like a sigh, "could have foreseen what has come to pass—though, bad as it is, it might possibly have been worse."

Then turning to the boatmen, who were in the act of deliberately taking down their loaded rifles—they not having considered the danger imminent since the closing of the passage—he said:

"My friends, you are more experienced in Indian wiles than myself—who, though something over two years in the western country, have never yet witnessed either an attack or a fight—tell me candidly what you think of our position here, and what chance we have, if any, of escaping from our enemies!"

"That thar's a thing not easy to do, Cap'n," replied Dick Winter; "for it arn't easy to tell our position afore we see it—nor to calkilate how long we can hold out fighting the devils, afore we know how many on 'em thar is. But one thing, I reckon, ar' purty sure—and that ar', that the bloody brutes wont attack us to-night."

"You feel certain of that, do you?" said Eugene.

"Why, nothing ar' exactly sartin, Cap'n, whar the painted heathen is consarned, 'cept devilment; but as fur's my experience goes, they wont be a bit more anxious to attack a boat as they can't see, nor we'll be to run out and hunt them."

"Ah! good heavens!" exclaimed Eugene, rousing up with a sudden thought; "if we only had a skiff—or even a couple of canoes—we might perhaps escape by abandoning the larger craft and goods to our foes! How unfortunate it is that we did not have forethought enough to provide a smaller boat for an emergency like this!"

"Wall, nobody as started out with any sense, could hev thought we'd run plump into the mud this here way, so's to make it o' any account," replied Seth Harper, with perfect *sang froid*, as he carefully inspected the lock of his rifle by the light, which now revealed the outlines of a Herculean frame, with a rough, red, weather-beaten physiognomy, in which the spirit of Momus seemed struggling with that of Mars. "Yes, Cap'n, it's a gospel fact, ef we had a little boat now, we mought all put off together; and ef the wuss come to the wusser, we mought all git drownded together; and that thar'd be a heap better nor giving the bloody brutes our scalps anyhow. Say, Dick, jest lend us your knife—this here flint wants pecking."

"But since you say the Indians will not attack us to-night, had we not better make another attempt to get our boat afloat?" inquired Eugene.

"Thar's only one thing agin our trying it," replied Dick; "and that ar', I think it's dangerous."

"How so?"

"Why, it's like the Injuns wont attack us, as I said afore; but they know we're here; and it's a'most a dead sartinty, too, that they know why we're here, and exactly how we're fixed; and so they'll keep a sharp watch out, to hear every movement; and the moment they'd larn by the sound as we war trying to git off, they'd be sure to slip in amongst us, and knife us afore we knowed it, like they done Tom Harris. Ah! poor Tom!" he added, with a deep sigh; "he war a good feller, Tom war, and it's hard to lose him."

"Jest when the poor feller could hev had a chance to fight Injuns, too!" put in Seth.

"I see!" rejoined Eugene, gloomily; "there is nothing for it but to wait till day-light, and then perhaps become the victims of a barbarous foe."

"But we'll hev a fight fust!" chimed in Seth Harper; "the cusses can't cheat us out o' that, ef they do the decent thing, as I 'spect they will."

"Yes," replied Eugene, "there will be a fight first, if that is any satisfaction to you, for I am resolved to surrender nothing while I live."

"That's the tork!" rejoined Seth, looking quite happy; "them's 'em—I'm about. Wall, this here old ark will make a right smart chance o' a fort, any how; and ef were lucky, and don't git hit, we can pepper a heap o' the varmints afore they git inside; and arter that, even, it mought be dangerous to the fust few o' the greasy brutes as put thar noses whar their faces wasn't wanted."

"We have plenty of ammunition, and at least six good rifles, including my own," said the young commander, in a less desponding tone, as if catching something of the warlike spirit of his rough companion; "and were it not for the position I hold to all parties, and the awful responsibility I feel resting upon me, I could view the affair with a much lighter heart than I do. But I will do my best, and that is all the best can do. We will bring out every weapon—every rifle, pistol, knife, dirk, hatchet, axe, and even bludgeon—everything, in fact, that can be used to maim and kill—and having put them all in order, we shall be as well prepared for the attack as it is possible under the circumstances.

"Though the prospect before us is gloomy," pursued Eugene, "it is weakness to despair; and the same fickle fortune which brought us here, may bring us relief. I am anxious to behold what the coming day will disclose! Even should we not be able to get afloat, and thus escape, we may be able to maintain our position here till—Ha! what noise is that?"

"It's the nigger snoring," laughed Seth; "he's cutting it down good, and don't know as nothing's happened. Shall I jest punch his ribs and tell him?"

"You may wake him, if you please, and say I want him."

The facetious boatman put down his rifle, and disappeared in the passage toward the stern. A moment or two after he was heard saying:

"Git up, Snow-ball—the Injuns hev attacked the boat, got us all cotched, and they want you for a roasting-piece!"

"Golly hebbens! what's dat you say?" cried the voice of Duke, in a quavering tone.

"Fact, by thunder! the brutes has got us this time, and no mistake! and they want to eat you fust, kase you're so powerful greasy."

"Dar, now—dar, now—I sees who you is—and it's a clar case—you're jest poking fun at dis pusson, you is."

"Ef you think it's fun to be dewoured—eyther raw, biled, or roasted—then why in thunder don't you laugh, you babboon!" growled Seth, assuming an angry tone. "Come, up with you—your master wants you—and he'll tell you a thing or two that'll tickle your fancy amazing."

With this Harper returned to what, for the sake of convenience, we will denominate the mess-room; and was quickly followed by the half-dressed negro, upon whose round, chubby face now rested a mingled expression of surprise, curiosity, and alarm.

"Dress yourself, Duke," said Eugene, "and be ready to do your duty when called upon!"

"Wha-wha-what's de matter, Marse Eugene?" stammered the black, his alarm increasing, and the whites of his eyes enlarging, as he turned inquiringly from one to the other.

"The matter is, that we have run aground in a fog, and are surrounded by Indians, as you would have known ere this, if you had not been so sound a sleeper."

"Thar! didn't I tell you so, Snow-ball?" grinned Seth. "Jest go and pin your ears back and butter your head, for thar's a big Injun out here as is a gwine for to swaller you whole!"

"De Lor' golly hebbens! you is all jest poking fun at dis chile, isn't you?" cried Duke, his features changing from black to brown, his eyes becoming very conspicuously white, and his teeth fairly chattering with terror.

"Go and do as you are bid!" said Eugene, sternly; "and since, as I understand, you have often boasted of your courage and fearlessness, I trust you will now make your words good!"

Duke slunk silently away, to don the remainder of his clothing, his appearance betokening anything but a happy frame of mind, or a spirit eager for the strife and din of war.

"We shall want some more bullets," said Eugene, as he examined his own and the pouches of his companions; "and they may as well be cast to-night, that everything may be in readiness for the morrow. However, Duke can attend to that, and that I fear is about all he will be good for in the coming struggle."

"Can't he shoot?" inquired Dick.

"He shoot!" exclaimed Seth, contemptuously; "why, the thundering, cowardly babboon 'ud git the gun wrong eend fust, and blow his own head off."

"Ha!" exclaimed Eugene, with a sudden start—"there is one precaution we have neglected, and God send it may not prove a fatal one!"

"What's that?" inquired the two boatmen, in the same breath.

"The sweeps and the steering oar! we have left them on deck! and should the Indians get hold of them, we shall be at their mercy indeed—for we should then have no means of working off the boat, or of managing it if afloat."

Seth Harper ripped out a tremendous oath, and cursed himself for having been such a fool as to forget them.

"We've got to hev 'em down here, right sudden!" he added, with a more serious air than was usual with him; "for ef the greasy imps git a crawling over the deck, as it's like they will afore morning, ef they haint yit, they'll be sure to find 'em, and take 'em away."

"They must be secured, at all hazards!" said Eugene.

"That's a p'inted fact," returned Seth, taking up a large hunting-knife which lay on the table, and thrusting it into the sheath of his belt, "and I'll go and do it at once."

"But will it not be dangerous to open the door of the passage?" inquired the young commander.

"Better git 'em through the trap, I reckon," chimed in Dick; "for we can slide that back powerful easy; and by kivering over the light, nobody above, ef thar'd happen to be anybody thar, could see down below here at all."

This being decided upon as the best plan to be adopted, the boatmen proceeded to put it in execution. The light was accordingly placed on the floor, and covered over with a kettle; and Seth Harper, mounting the table, began cautiously to undo the inner fastenings of the trap door, and slide it noiselessly back. As soon as the opening was thus made large enough to admit his body, he pushed his head and shoulders through, placed his hands upon the deck, and slowly and silently drew himself up—leaving his companions below, rifle in hand, to await in breathless suspense the result of his adventure.

For a few moments all was perfectly still; and then there was suddenly heard a sharp exclamation, accompanied by the noise of a fierce scuffle and struggle; and ere the parties below, alarmed by the sounds, had time to take any action whatever, a piercing shriek rung out upon the still night; and then, almost in the same breath, some heavy body came crashing through the opening, crushing down the table, jarring the whole boat, and filling all hearts with alarm and dismay.

CHAHTER V.

THE FIRST AFFRAY.

"Gracious Heaven! what have we here?" shouted the voice of Eugene, as he hurriedly produced the light, and revealed to his astonished gaze a knot of human beings, rolled up and tangled together, and all apparently struggling for life and death.

"I've got the beast to a tignter hug nor ary b'ar!" cried the voice of Seth Harper, in the catching, half-smothered tones of one exerting all his strength in a desperate struggle. "Lay low, boys, and you'll soon see who's the best nigger o' the pile!"

"Look out! look out! the devils is above thar!" yelled Dick Winter, suddenly bringing his piece to his shoulder, and firing through the opening—the dusky forms of some three or four savages being at the same instant dimly seen by the light, as they pointed down their muskets, uttered their loud, shrill whoops, and fired simultaneously—two of their balls slightly grazing the dauntless boatman, and burying themselves in the stout planks below, and a third knocking the lamp from the hand of Eugene, extinguishing the light, and involving all parties in total darkness.

"De Lor' golly hebbens! murder! fire! help!" screamed the voice of the negro, as he disengaged himself from beneath the shattered table, and the bodies of the struggling foes, who had crushed him down in their sudden descent—he having finished his toilet, groped his way back to the mess-room, and ensconced himself under that rude piece of furniture, just in time to become mixed up in the affray in a manner as unexpected as it was disagreeable. "Murder! fire! help!" he repeated, in tones of the most abject terror, as he suddenly recovered his feet, and darted back through the passage to the very stern, where, falling upon his knees, he began to pray all sorts of prayers, in such lugubrious tones as at any other time would have forced a laugh from a cynic.

"Secure the trap-door!" shouted Eugene, his loud, sonorous voice being scarcely heard, in the wild confusion and tumult, above the cries and shouts of the different parties—the screams of the black wench, from the apartment of her mistress, being now added to the din.

His order, fortunately, was obeyed almost as soon as uttered—for Dick Winter, the instant he fired his rifle, knowing that the salvation of all depended upon the keeping out of their savage foes, had seized a bench, mounted to the opening, and was in the act of forcing over and securing the heavy door at the very moment the words of his superior reached his ear, though the rayless darkness did not permit the latter to perceive him.

"It's done, Cap'n!" he almost immediately shouted back, in the satisfied tone of one who felt greatly relieved. "It's done, and a clean job I've made on't—though, ef the howling niggers had a been half as smart as they think they is, we'd a gone to etarnity fust. But I reckon that thar shot o' mine confused 'em a bit, ef it didn't do nothing more, and that thar gin me a chance to git the kivering over afore they knowed what I war about. Ay! yell away, you miserable hounds!" he added, somewhat jocosely, as at the same moment the cries of the savages above seemed to indicate that they had suddenly made the discovery that their victims had for the time escaped them. "Whoo-whoo-whoop!" he defiantly yelled back; "see how you like that thar, you greasy niggers!" Then, as if suddenly remembering his companion, he called out: "I say, Seth, old feller, how goes it? You alive and kicking, with scalp safe and no bones broke?"

"Right side up, like the ace o' trumps!" returned the other, blowing his breath out like a porpoise. "Scalp tight, and nary break."

"Wall, what hev you got thar, anyhow, that you made such a thundering noise about?"

"I've got a purty beauty, I reckon," replied Seth, with a self-satisfied grunt, "though it's so almighty dark here that I can't make out what he looks like."

"Hev you got him so he'll keep?" inquired Dick.

"He's spiled meat now, the greasy beast! though it took awful strong choking and knifing to lay him out docile."

"I thought it war an 'arthquake when you come

down, by thunder!" said Dick; "and thar war purty much of a time, right arter, you can sw'ar," he continued; "for the brutes got right over the hole, and poured down a ginewine shower o' lead, they did; but I gin 'em back as good as they sent, ef I didn't as much; and then I did so'thing as war wanted pertikelar—I got up and stopped the hole here, to keep 'em out. Didn't you hear the guns, Seth?"

"I thought I heerd so'thing," answered the other; "but I war too ambitious jest then to listen. I thought at fust I'd got two on 'em—but one on 'em felt powerful wooly, and I 'spect it war Snow-ball—leastways, whatsomever it war, it broke sudden, with one o' the yelps, and I kept to the critter as I knowed war true meat. Hark! ar'n't that Snow-ball now, howling his prayers?"

"That's the black nigger," replied Dick.

"Wall, he oughter be happy, ef he aint, seeing he's jest the color o' us white gintlemen now."

From the moment of the fall of Seth with his antagonist, to the closing of the trap-door by his companion, was a space of time scarcely exceeding thirty seconds—though the recording of the exclamations of the different speakers, which were uttered almost in the same breath, may have made it appear much longer to the reader; and on hearing the announcement of Dick that the opening was secured, Eugene had hastened back to his own room to procure another light, with which he appeared in the passage while the boatmen were conversing, the sound of whose voices, though he could not distinguish their words, assured him that the danger, though imminent a minute before, was not so now.

The first object that met his gaze was the beautiful Blanche, standing just within her own door, looking pale but calm. Just behind her was her waiting-woman, cowering and trembling, wringing her hands, and sobbing forth her terrors.

"Silence, Rose!" said Blanche, sternly, partly turning to the frightened black. "Is your life more valuable than mine, that you make such a foolish display of your fears?"

"Oh, Miss Blanche, I can't help it! 'deed and 'deed I can't!" cried the poor wench, shrinking timidly back. "Oh, the Lor' A'mighty help us! we shall all be murdered, sartin!—dear! dear!"

"Silence!" rejoined her mistress, "or I shall be compelled to lock you in the room."

This threat somewhat quieted the negress; and Blanche, turning to Eugene, said:

"What means this firing and tumult? are we really attacked?"

"We have just had a narrow and most wonderful escape," replied Eugene; who proceeded to explain what had happened, as far as he himself knew.

When he came to speak of the firing down of the savages, and the knocking of the lamp from his hand, Blanche turned a shade more pale, and caught quickly and somewhat nervously hold of the door, as if for support.

"That was a narrow escape indeed!" she almost gasped; "you might have been killed!"

"I should hold my own life a matter of little moment, provided its loss could insure *your* safety!" he rejoined, with a look and tone that carried conviction of the truth of his declaration.

The pallor of the features of Blanche was instantly supplanted by a slight glow, as she replied in a quick, excited tone:

"But it could not, Eugene—it could not; my safety depends rather upon yours; and so I pray you be not rash, and recklessly throw away that which is yours on trust!"

A deep flush sprung to the very temples of Eugene, as he heard these words so earnestly spoken, and thought for a moment that his fate might not be indifferent to the fair being of his adoration; but in the same instant he remembered that she had said her safety depended on his, which might wholly account for her interest in his well-being beyond that of mere friendship; though it was almost a happy thought to think their destiny was in some degree united, if only for the hour of danger, perchance the hour of death.

"I will be cautious of my life, if only for your sake," he replied; "since I know that a single loss to our small party must materially lessen the possibility of your escape."

"And what chance have we, as matters stand?" inquired Blanche.

"Alas!" replied Eugene, in a desponding tone, a deep shade of sadness and gloom overspreading his fine, manly features.

"Ha! tell me—tell me all and truly—conceal nothing from me!" said his fair questioner, compressing her lips, and placing a hand upon her breast, as one preparing for the most dreadful of tidings.

"I will, Miss Blanche," he rejoined; "I will conceal nothing from you—for it is right and proper you should know the worst—you have strength of mind sufficient to look your doom, if doom it prove, heroically in the face—but Heaven knows how painful is the task imposed! Our chances of escape are reduced to the fewest number; and I fear that nothing short of an interposition of Providence can save us, either from death, or from what may prove by far more terrible, the falling into the hands of our barbarous foes. If we had only had the forethought to have provided a small boat, it is barely possible we might have escaped under cover of this darkness—though it seems that the Indians, perhaps anticipating something of the kind, have already taken possession of all the avenues by which it might have been effected, as proved by their sudden attack upon the boatman when he ventured upon deck to secure the oars; and as he failed in his attempt, it is more than likely the savages have ere this secured them, and now have us at their mercy indeed!"

"How unfortunate that they should have been overlooked till too late!" said Blanche.

"I do not know as we could use them, if in our possession," replied Eugene; "but without them there seems but little hope of escape."

"Could there not be new ones constructed, by taking up some of the planks of the flooring here?" inquired Blanche.

"Nothing, I fear, that would be of any service to us, unless we were afloat; and even then we could scarcely manage the boat by anything short of the long, heavy sweeps and steering oar."

"Well," rejoined Blanche, encouragingly, "we must do the best we can, and trust the rest to Him who notes the fall of a sparrow! If it is His will that we escape, we shall prevail against all difficulties and dangers; if it is His will that we perish, our doom cannot be averted. Let us therefore endeavor to be calm, collected and firm, cautious and vigilant, and waver not in the discharge of our duty. It is a fearful position in which we are placed; but there is nothing, I think, with which we need reproach ourselves; no careless neglect of ours has brought our misfortunes upon us; being human, we could not have foreseen what has come to pass; and hence it becomes us, as reasoning, intellectual beings, not to give way to idle fears and vain repinings."

Eugene was about to reply, when a loud and sudden exclamation of one of the boatmen arrested his words.

"A light here, Cap'n!—quick!—a light!" shouted the voice of Dick.

"Ha! what is the matter?" cried Eugene, suddenly darting forward.

"The brutes is trying the trap-door agin," replied the boatman, "and I want to see ef all the fastenings is right;" and catching the lamp from the hand of his superior, he held it close up under the deck, and immediately announced that all was as safe as it could be made. "Ay, let 'em work away," he added; "ef they don't git into the boat till they git in thar, we'll hev time enough to eat up our feed, anyhow."

A frightful spectacle now presented itself to the eyes of Eugene, and also those of Blanche, who had followed him unperceived. Partly upon the floor, and partly upon the broken table, was stretched the gory and hideous corpse of a large Indian, naked except his breech-cloth and moccasins, his harsh features and reddish-brown skin, being streaked with alternate colors of red, white, and black, with which his blood from several gaping wounds had so mingled as to produce a most horrible and repulsive sight; while almost over him, his rough features somewhat disfigured by several long scratches, a bloody knife in his hand, and his garments stained with blood also, stood the stalwart figure of Seth Harper, gazing down upon the body of his late foe with a blended expression of curiosity, contempt, and satisfaction.

"Thar's a beauty!" muttered the boatman, rather to himself than as addressing any one in particular; "thar's the beast as war anxious fur a fight; and he got it, too; but I 'spect he got out on't in a way as warn't the most agreeable. I war agwine to take his scalp at the first go; but arter I found I'd got him docile, I thought I'd wait for a light, and do it nicer like. Hello!" he added, with a start, as he chanced to look up and discover the pale features of Blanche; "this here's no place for you, lady!"

Eugene turned quickly at the words; and perceiving our heroine almost at his elbow, he not being aware that she had followed him, he added, hurriedly, and somewhat excitedly:

"No, indeed, Miss Blanche! no indeed! this is no place for you! Such a sight as this is not meet for eyes like yours!"

"They must become accustomed to even worse, I fear!" she returned. "But I will retire."

Saying which, she drew quietly back, and returned to her own apartment.

As soon as she was gone, Seth very deliberately set to work to scalp the savage—bestowing upon the senseless body the while several opprobrious epithets—which, had the warrior been living and understood, he would not have considered in any degree complimentary to his sagacity, skill, and physical abilities.

On Eugene inquiring into the particulars of the affair, Seth proceeded, in his characteristic manner, to explain, that, after reaching the deck, and while feeling his way carefully along in search of the sweeps, his extended hands had suddeuly come in contact with the Indian; that both had clinched at the same moment; and that, after a severe struggle, he had stabbed his foe and fallen with him through the opening to the spot where the corpse now lay, and where the contest had quickly terminated in the death of the savage. He added that he believed his own life had been saved by the fall; as the other Indians, who appeared so quickly upon the scene, would doubtless have killed him at once.

"A very narrow escape for all of us," said Eugene; "but I fear it is only giving us a slight reprieve; for the Indians must ere this have got possession of the sweeps, and now really command the boat, so that there is no possibility of our escape."

"It's got a dubious look, I'll allow," rejoined Seth; "but though we're cooped up here, and haint a decent chance for a fa'r fight, they won't git us afore thar's some more blood spilt, that's sartin!"

"Now that you know the whole danger, do you think there is a bare possibility of our escape?" inquired Eugene, anxiously.

"Wall, Cap'n," replied Seth, reflectively, "taking everything into view, and speaking honest, I'm sorry, on the Cunnel's darter's account, to say I don't think thar's much—nothing to brag on, anyhow. But then," he added, encouragingly, "I'm one o' them as has been in tight fixes afore, and I never found ary use in giving up. I reckon we're safe enough for to-night, ef we don't none on us put our noses out agin; and when daylight comes, and this thundering fog lifts, we'll know better what thar'll be for us to do."

"Will the savages not make an attempt to fire the boat, think you?"

"They won't be in any partikelar hurry about it, Cap'n; that thar'll be one o' thar last dodges, arter everything else has failed; for they know boats don't come down the river empty; and they're the niggers as wants our goods as well as our scalps."

"God save us all!" ejaculated Eugene. "If we only had a small boat, we might cut a passage through on the river side, embark, and leave them our goods as their only prize. Ha!" he added, with a sudden lighting up of his expressive features, at the same time glancing quickly and eagerly around him; "a new idea strikes me! Cannot something be constructed, in which we may all venture? Remember, we have boxes, bales, and barrels here, stout planks in the flooring, and many hours between this and daylight!"

"It mought be done, I do believe!" said Seth, with an oath; in which opinion Dick Winter also concurred.

The face of Eugene instantly grew brighter with hope.

"Quick, then!" he exclaimed, with increased animation of voice; "let us set about it at once! Put your scalp aside, Seth, if you will preserve such horrible trophies, and let the body of that savage be dragged aft and covered over, since we have no way of throwing it out. I will procure another light and bring out the tools; and we will go to work at once, and work like men whose lives depend upon their haste!"

This new plan being thus positively decided upon, there was no longer any idle hesitation; and in less than ten minutes the sound of saws, hammers, axes, and augurs, and the busy appearance of all parties, now divested of their superfluous garments, and bending to the task with a will, gave to the enlivened scene the appearance of a regular workshop.

For more than an hour all remained quiet without; and during that time the work had so well progressed as to give all parties the greatest amount of hope—Eugene now and then addressing his companions encouragingly, and speaking in more animated tones than had fallen from his lips since the first moment of the disaster.

But though he spoke to the men, he thought of Blanche—the beautiful Blanche—who would thus be saved from a most horrible doom, and owe her deliverance to him; and with a reaction from despair to hope, his heart was fairly bounding with joy, when suddenly there was heard a creaking and a straining of the timbers of the boat, followed almost immediately by a kind of gliding, rocking motion.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Eugene, with a wild look of joy, as all suddenly ceased their work; "the boat is moving! she is afloat! we shall yet be saved!"

Getting no reply, he turned quickly to the boatmen, as one surprised that they did not participate in his rapturous feelings. But he was more surprised still to perceive their gloomy, lowering looks, as their tools dropped idly from their hands, and they exchanged glances of ominous significance.

"Ha! what now? Speak!" cried Eugene, his flushed features instantly paling with alarm.

"It's no use, Cap'n," returned Dick, shaking his head; "it's no use; our work goes for nothing; the devils hev got us."

"Speak out!" almost gasped Eugene: "what do you mean?"

"Jest this, Cap'n, and nothing else: This here boat went too tight onto the mud to float off herself; and the infernal niggers hev got thar ropes over her, and they're towing her to some place whar they'll be able to make quick work on't, and git our scalps easy like."

"Ah! God have mercy on us!" groaned the young commander, reeling like one intoxicated, and fairly sinking down in despair

CHAPTER VI.

THE DANGER THICKENS.

For some little time after the last despairing ejaculation of Eugene, not a single word was spoken—each of the different parties being apparently too busy with his own gloomy thoughts to give them utterance—the boat meanwhile, with still an occasional creaking, straining sound, steadily maintaining its easy, gliding, rocking motion.

At length Eugene, who had sat with his face buried in his hands, as one overwhelmed with grief, or lost to hope, suddenly started to his feet, almost wildly exclaiming:

"Can nothing be done? Is there no way of saving ourselves? Must we sit quietly and idly here, like so many prisoners awaiting their doom?"

"What can we do, Cap'n?" returned Dick. "That thar's what bothers me, too. Ef I only knowed *what* to do. I'm one o' them as 'ud like to be at it."

"Oh, this mist! this fog! this fatal vapor! that clouds our sight! that conceals from us the number and position of our foes! that holds us powerless upon the very brink of destruction!" cried Eugene, beginning to pace rapidly to and fro, as was his wont when under great and strong excitement.

"Ha!" he added, as another new idea seemed to strike him; "cannot we cut the rope? It appears like a desperate undertaking, I know," he pursued quickly, without giving his listeners time for reply; "but the attempt will only result in death or captivity at the worst—one or the other of which must be our doom if we remain idly where we are; and should we by good fortune succeed, remember we are afloat, and may possibly effect our escape."

"It's a risky job, as you say, Cap'n," replied Dick Winter; "but I don't know that it's any wuss nor staying here quiet, waiting to be butchered; and I'm one as thinks it oughter be tried."

"Wall," rejoined Seth, "I'm ready for anything 'cept squatting down and holding my hands; and ef the red niggers is a gwine to git me, the sooner they does it, the sooner I'll know it—or else I won't know nothing, which ar' about the same thing. So jest pass us your pistols, Cap'n, and gin me a way out—eyther through the door thar, or through the deck—and whatsomever can be done, I'll do."

"No," said Dick, "you went afore, and it's my turn now."

"In this case," interrupted Eugene, "I shall call upon neither of you. I know you are brave, undaunted men; but the proposition—whose execution may, or may not, involve the greatest amount of peril—is mine; and it is no more than right and proper that on this occasion the risk should be mine also. But the danger may not really be so great as we imagine, after all; for the rope, or thong, or whatever it may be—by which, as we suppose, the boat is now being towed along—is probably near the bow—the night is too dark for any object to be discerned—and by opening the door cautiously and silently, and gliding stealthily forward, the work may be accomplished without the enemy being aware of it until too late."

"But don't you think the Injuns is thar keeping guard over it, like?" said Seth; "and don't you think, Cap'n, they'd be thundering fools not to spread themselves all round, in every direction, jest to take advantage of the first miss-go on our side? and to wind up, jest s'pose the varments is thar, and what 'ud become o' you?"

"Or you, Seth? whose life must be as valuable to you as mine is to me!" returned Eugene.

"Wall, what did become o' me afore?" queried the stalwart boatman.

"But that is no criterion by which to be governed," said Eugene. "Because you escaped then, in an almost miraculous manner, is no proof that you will again."

"That's a p'inted fact, Cap'n; but still I reckon I knows more about Injun deviltries nor you, and I think I'd make a safer job on't. Besides, you're kind o' wanted here, like, to take keer of the Cunnel's darter; and it looks righter for eyther me or Dick to go, nor you."

"That's my opine," said Dick.

"You are both brave, noble fellows!" rejoined Eugene, warmly; "but on this point my mind is settled, and discussion only produces delay. Should I fall, be true to Miss Bertrand, and protect her with your lives!"

"Better send Snow-ball!" suggested Seth, ironically, "for he's o' no account whar he ar'."

"Da-da-dar, now, Ma-Ma-Marse Seth!" stammered Duke, turning as white as the nature of his organization would permit; "I—I—I'd drudder stay here, and fight where I is, I——"

"Silence!" interrupted Eugene, as he commenced carefully to inspect and reprime his pistols, one of which he placed in his belt, and the other in his left hand, while in his right he grasped firmly his keen hunting-knife. "This is no time," he went on, "for trifling or jesting, but for the most serious thoughts and prudent demeanor on the part of us all! Now, then, cover over the light as before, give me exit through yonder door, and be prepared, with all your weapons, to guard the passage at all hazards!"

As he said this, he went forward to carry his desperate plan into execution, but unexpectedly found his way obstructed by an obstacle less easy to remove than the objections of the boatmen. This was none other than the fair Blanche herself, who suddenly glided from her own apartment and placed her light form against the door of the passage—her beautiful features, as Eugene could see by the light which shone from her own room, now looking as pale as death.

"You cannot pass here, Eugene!" she said, in a calm, firm tone. "I have overheard your conversation, and comprehend all; and your life shall not be thus wantonly sacrificed for me! and it would be sacrificed without avail, I feel well assured, were you to cross this threshold."

Eugene felt his heart bound with wild emotions as he heard these words; but still resolute to his purpose, he used every argument he could summon to his aid, and even resorted to entreaty, to induce Blanche to permit him to undertake the enterprise on which he had set his heart. But all his arguments and entreaties were of no avail. Blanche resolutely refused to yield. She reminded him of his solemn promise to be careful of his life for *her* sake, and declared she would not release him from it.

"Oh, I fear this will prove, if it has not already proved, a fatal mistake of yours!" exclaimed Eugene, hurriedly, as the boat at that moment seemed to strike some obstruction, rebound, and glide on again as before. "Think! only for a moment think! that we are standing idly here, and permitting our enemies to drag us to some advantageous point, where they will have us more completely in their power—where there will be no chance of escape—no hope! And all because you will not permit us, in these moments of probation, as it were, to attempt to cut ourselves free! Oh, for Heaven's sake, recall your words! release my honor! release me of my promise, ere it shall be too late! Or, if you will not let me go, let another go!—let something indeed be tried, and instantly!"

"Your promise only binds yourself," returned Blanche; "as to another making the perilous adventure, it shall be as you and he think best."

Eugene once more immediately turned to dart back to his companions; but this time his steps were suddenly arrested, and his blood seemingly congealed, by a loud, wild cry, accompanied by a heavy fall on the deck above him, and followed by the most horrible screeches and yells, apparently those of triumph.

"Great God!" he exclaimed: "we are environed indeed!"

"Did not my heart too truly tell me so?" said Blanche.

"But what fall was that?" pursued Eugene, anxiously. "Most surely none of our little party! And yet I have my fears! I have my fears!"

And instantly darting away to the center of the boat, he pronounced the names of Seth and Dick as he ran.

"I'm here, Cap'n," replied the voice of Harper; "I'm here, all right and tight; but I s'pect Dick, poor feller, has gone along o' Tom; for the blundering fool would go instead o' me—though I told him he'd git hurt; and now I reckon, from that thar yell, the devils hev got his scalp."

"But who told either of you to go?" demanded Eugene, in what seemed an angry tone.

"Why, nobody 'cept ourselves," replied Seth; "but, you see, we'd seed and heerd that the young lady warn't a gwine to let you out—and we knowed, ef the rope war cut at all, it 'ud hev to be done afore to-morrow—and so Dick, he said he'd go out this way and head you off; and I said he shouldn't, I'd go; and he said I shouldn't, he'd go; and atween the two ways o' doing it, we come nigh gitting into a fight; but knowing as I could lick him ef we did, I didn't want to take that thar adwantage of him; and so I let him out o' that thar skylight—only thar don't happen to be no light o' no kind thar now. Poor feller!" sighed Seth; "I s'pect he's a goner, 'long o' Tom; but the thundering fool would go in spite o' me; and so, ef he knows anything now, he can't blame nobody 'cept Dick Winter."

"Alas!" groaned Eugene; "our last hope is gone! and now the living have only to envy the dead, and prepare for a still more terrible fate than theirs."

For a few minutes after he spoke, there came a succession of shocks, at short intervals, now to the right and now to the left, as if the heavy boat were uncertainly entering and passing along a narrow channel. Then came a heavier shock, followed by a grating sound and a cessation of motion. And then uprose, around, on every side, what seemed a hundred of the wildest, fiercest, and most savage yells of triumph—to which, alas! more than one poor heart responded with a groan of deep despair.

CHAPTER VII.

THE ENVOY OF THE ENEMY.

As soon as these wild yells of triumph had died away to silence, they were followed by a few single whoops, and a few other noisy demonstrations of delight, such as dancing on the deck, striking the boat with hatchets, and occasionally discharging a musket, apparently into the air.

Presently a loud voice was heard speaking in tones as of harangue or command—during which all other noises ceased, as if the different parties were listening with respectful attention; and then Eugene—who had meantime sunk down upon a seat, gloomily pondering the awful fate impending, not only over him, but over her whose life he held dearer than his own—was greatly surprised to hear that same loud voice suddenly hail the boat in English.

"Hello the boat!" said the voice. "Within thar—ho!"

"Who speaks?" demanded Eugene, starting suddenly to his feet.

"One that wants to be your friend, if you'll only give him a chance."

"I will give anybody a chance to be my *friend*," returned Eugene.

"Then just open your door thar, and I'll walk in and shake hands."

"Who are you?" demanded Eugene.

"That's a cl'ar case, Cap'n, as Snow-ball says," put in Seth, contemptuously; "he's a cussed runnagade—or else he wouldn't be with t'other howling niggers, and want to be your friend like."

"Hark!" exclaimed Eugene, bending his ear to listen to the tones of the other, as he called back:

"I'm a white gentleman—and that's enough for any other white gentleman to know—names don't matter."

"He a gentleman!" muttered Seth, beginning to grind his teeth, stretch out his long arms, and work his fingers as one clutching at some imaginary object: "I tell you he arn't nothing but a damnable runnagade—a sneaking decoy-dog of a bloody, greasy set o' plundering thieves! I'd jest like to hev him hanging over a big fire, and me hold o' t'other eend of the rope; or I'd like him sot on a p'inted pole, 'bout twenty feet high in the air, whar he couldn't git down till I let him; or I'd like him headed up in a barrel, and me the owner of the furnitur'; or I'd——"

"Hush!" interrupted Eugene; "do pray keep your tongue, till I can ascertain what he wants."

"Oh, that thar's easy enough knowed!" pursued the somewhat loquacious Seth, who now appeared more angry and excited than Eugene had ever before seen him, and who seemed bent upon having his say, without regard to the proprieties of time and place. "I can tell you all about what he wants, and you'd find it out soon enough ef you didn't ax eyther o' us. He wants this here boat, and all that's in it—me, you, the young lady, and the two black niggers. He wants our likker to git drunk on—our 'bakker to smoke—our powder to burn—our perwisions to eat—our goods to make fan-faws and gim-cracks for his squaws—the Cunnel's darter for a new wife—and the rest on us, throwing in the woolly niggers, for roasting pieces. That's what he *wants!*" concluded the angry boatman, with an oath; "and ef you don't believe it, ax him twice and see!"

Eugene shuddered, for he felt there was too much truth in the words of his rude companion.

"Come! are you going to open your door and shake hands or not?" now cried the voice from without, in a quick, sharp, impatient tone.

"And if I should," returned Eugene, "the Indians would come in with you."

"Not many of 'em," answered the other; "and them as did would be as quiet and harmless as doves. They rayther like you; they think that Mishemenetoc, or the Great Spirit, has sent you here for their good; and they want to get in peaceable and tell you so."

"It has very much of that appearance," returned Eugene, ironically; "since they have been so very kind as to murder a couple of our party, by way of proving their friendship!"

"Them's 'em!" said Seth; "gin it to the white nigger good! and don't open the door for any o' the thieves; but jest call 'em names, git 'em as mad as thunder, and let's hev a fight and die game!—it's much better'n roasting, anyhow!"

"Why, that as we done, war only *twice* as much as you done," returned the voice from without, thus alluding to the Indian slain by Seth; "and you see ours war in the way of business, too; for your good friends out here didn't want you to get away, and so they stopped them as war trying to; but now that they've got you towed up a creek, whar you're perfectly safe, they feel mighty pleasant, and happy, and want to shake hands. So just open the door, and do the fair thing, and we'll all have a jolly time together."

"Up a creek, hey?" muttered Seth, reflectively; "banks on both sides, hey? Stop, Cap'n—don't say the hard words yit; I've got a idee; talk him possum, but keep the door shut; put him off till morning—for nyther he nor his imps darn't break in to-night, agin Wirgin'a rifles in the dark."

"Suppose we refuse to open the door?" called out Eugene; "what then?"

"Why then your good friends out here will think you don't want to see 'em, and they'll come in to see what the matter is."

"And are my good friends out there anxious to be received with a salute of honor?" inquired Eugene; "a salute of twenty rifles, loaded with ball, and unfortunately pointed too low to be perfectly safe?"

This was answered by a loud laugh of derision, and the rejoinder in words:

"Twenty rifles, hey? Come! you know that's a lie! You know you haint got more'n six altogether, and not more'n half as many persons to shoot 'em! whilst we've got fifty at least. Do you think, now, I don't know nothing how you're fixed? Do you think, now, I haint been over your deck and heerd so'thing of your talk?"

"The sneaking whelp!" interjected Seth.

"Come! open your door," continued the renegade, "and give us peaceable entrance, and we'll treat you decent; but if you don't, we'll hew it down and come in anyhow; and then God help you! You'll see little mercy then!"

'What! not from my good *friends?*" was the sarcastic rejoinder.

"Ah! but they wouldn't be your friends then!" replied the other.

"What shall we do?" queried Eugene, turning anxiously to the boatman. "It must come to the same thing in the end; we cannot hold out; we are surrounded, and all hope of escape cut off; and perhaps a peaceful surrender, without further bloodshed, may cause our enemies to treat us more leniently."

"Don't you believe a word on't, Cap'n!" replied Seth, grating his teeth; "but whatsomever you make up your mind to do, don't think o' opening the door to-night—for the bloody cowards wont make a rigelar attack afore morning, anyhow—and afore then so'thing else mought turn up, as I've knowed it to do in my lifetime. I've got a idee, as I said afore; and when you're done with that hound out thar, I'll tell you all about it. You can speak him civil, ef you like, and gain time; but let him know he can't git in afore daylight, ef he does then."

"Well," called out Eugene, acting upon the suggestion of his more experienced companion, and speaking in a tone intended to express firmness and confidence in his own resources, "whatever may be our number or that of our Indian *friends*, we do not intend to receive visitors to-night; but to-morrow morning, if we find your force so far outnumbers ours as you say, we will endeavor to come to amicable terms."

"Do you doubt my word about the force?" rejoined the other, angrily.

"Why, you did mine," replied Eugene; "and I think myself as capable of telling the truth as you are."

"But you lied then, anyhow!"

"I think I have told as much truth, during our brief conversation, as my worthy white gentleman friend," was the quiet retort.

"You wont open the door, then, and let us in peaceable?"

"Not to-night, if you please!" said Eugene, decidedly. "Neither of us can gain anything by doing so: we are not going to run away, nor you either."

"That's true, by ——!" rejoined the other with a laugh, and using an oath we will not record.

"Then give us till daylight; and if we can agree to be friends then, we will make you a present of a very valuable cargo."

"Well, one thing's sartin," said the spokesman of the enemy; "you can't get away, and we shan't; and so, as I want to do everything friendly and peaceable, I'll give you this here proposition to think on: If you'll lay down your arms, march out quietly, and give up everything, I'll guarantee the Injuns to treat you as brothers; but if you don't, and we have to take what we get by hard knocks, I'll just pledge you my honor, that we'll eyther take your scalps here, or roast you when we get home! So think the matter all over, and take your choice. I'll want an answer by daylight at the furthest. Do you understand?"

"I have heard you, and will give the matter due consideration," answered Eugene.

With this the conference between the two parties ended; and immediately after the white envoy of the savages was heard addressing them in their native tongue, apparently explaining to them what had been said on both sides. On the conclusion of his speech, there followed some noisy demonstrations—though whether of approval or disapproval Eugene could not determine—and then the larger portion of the enemy, if not all, appeared to retire to some little distance, and quietude and silence gradually settled over the late tumultuous scene.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

BAIT.—One animal impaled upon a hook, in order to torture a second, for the amusement of a third.

SONG OF THE DYING BOY.

BY C. S.

Mother, mother, let me kiss thee
Once again before I die;
Let me clasp my arms around thee,
On thy bosom let me lie.
Earth is fleeting, fast decaying
From my weary, weary sight—
Dearest mother, let me kisss thee
Ere I bid a LONG "Good night!"

Ah! how sorely it doth grieve me,
Gentle mother, thus to know
That I may not live to cheer *thee*
When thou art oppressed with wo.
Thus to leave thee, and for ever
From my home and friends to part;
Every tie of love to sever,
That hath bound my hopeful heart.

Oh! 'tis painful, very painful,
Thus to meet the silent tomb;
Torn from all that's bright and lovely,
To endure a fearful gloom:
Forced from all the little pleasures
That have joy'd my youthful mind—
Innocence, and love, and friendship,
Every cherish'd thing resign'd.

Hark! the little birds are singing
Sweetly now their evening lay,
See! the glorious sun is setting,
Oh! how beautiful his ray!
Farewell, all ye lovely visions,
Beauteous nature, fare thee well;
Longer I may not behold ye,
Native earth, farewell, farewell!

Mother, mother, I am going
To a land of peace and rest,
Where the bitter tear of anguish
Never dews the aching breast;
Where the soul, escaped for ever
From its tenement of clay,
Beams irradiate with the splendor
Of a bright eternal day.

Mother, mother, I *must* leave thee;
See, the clammy death frost now,
Herald of the King of Terror,
Standeth fearful on my brow.
Ah! the beauteous peaceful haven
Of that blessed Land's in sight—
Mother, mother, Jesus calls me,
I *must* go—Good-night! Good-night!

GRACE AUDLEY'S VOW.

BY MARY C. VAUGHAN.

"Grace, I am dying! Come nearer, daughter, that I may speak to you, with the little strength that remains, my parting words. It is hard, hard to leave my unprotected children to struggle alone amidst the vicissitudes of life."

"Oh, mother, mother, do not speak such terrible words. You will not leave us. God who is kind and merciful——"

"His will be done, my darling—" the mother's feeble voice, in solemn tones, interrupted the wild, passionate utterances of her child. "Know you not, Grace, that 'He doeth all things well?' Even in this solemn hour, as I stand upon the verge of the dark river, with earth and all its hopes, joys, fears, and cares behind me—all but the separation from my darlings past forever, my soul acknowledges the great, central truth of God's love. Be calm, my child, and listen to your dying mother."

By a mighty effort the young girl controlled her sobs, wiped the streaming tears from her pale cheeks, and kneeling beside her mother's couch, with her fond arms encircling that dying form, she prepared to listen in silence.

After a moment of painful thought, that, spite of the spiritual exaltation with which she looked upon her approaching change, would obtrude in that parting hour, the dying woman spoke.

Her first words were only some necessary directions in relation to worldly matters, clear, simple, distinct, and perfectly comprehended.

"I leave you one great charge, my Grace," the mother added; "your blind sister, a sacred legacy of care and sacrifice—your blind sister, Alice. Since I have known that I must die, my children have occupied my thoughts even more, perhaps, than they ought. I leave you both a competence, Grace, and that will lighten your own burdens greatly. But Alice is feeble and sensitive, exacting and requiring constant care and attendance. Grace, it is a great sacrifice that I demand of you—no less than your promise that you will never entrust Alice to any other guardianship than your own; never assume any duties that will conflict with those you owe her. Do you promise?"

"Willingly, my mother; oh, how willingly."

"But do you comprehend all that this promise involves, my child? The complete isolation from all domestic ties; the barrenness of a life without love; the devotion to an object which can return so little for all the mighty dower of kindness bestowed—do you comprehend all these sacrifices?"

"Mother, I love only you and Alice! Her I receive as your sacred legacy. I am content; and here, before God, in this solemn hour, I register my promise to devote my life to my blind sister, even as you have said; and while we both live, none shall come between me and the fulfillment of my vow. Do you hear me, mother, dear?"

"I hear, and thank you, beloved child. You have lifted a mighty burden from my dying heart. Kiss me once more, and then call Alice."

Kissing her mother's pallid cheek, Grace Audley laid her gently down upon her pillows, and went silently from the room. In a few moments she returned, leading by the hand a weeping child, who, groping her way with the uncertain step that painfully indicated her malady, approached the bed.

Alice Audley flung herself with a cry of agony upon her mother's bosom, while tears streamed from her sightless eyes, and rolled down her wan cheeks. She had just learned that her mother was dying, and that the parting which she had never before deemed possible, was close at hand. Her agony was most pitiful to behold. She had no power to listen calmly to the solemn parting words of her beloved parent; but presently, quite overcome with grief, and almost fainting, she was borne from the room in the arms of her patient, self-sacrificing, elder sister.

Ere many hours had passed, Grace Audley stood beside the pale, cold form of her dead mother, and realized the deep desolation of her orphanhood. Except her blind sister Alice, a helpless charge upon her own youthful inexperience, she was utterly alone, far from her native land, and the friends of her infancy. But this very charge, and the solemn words by which her mother had bound her to a life-long fulfillment of its duties, seemed, in this sad hour, to give her the needed strength. Kneeling there beside the still form of the dead, she renewed her vow, and besought guidance and support in the path that lay before her, from Him whose promises never fail—the Father of the fatherless.

Then, from out the silent presence of death, she stole to the bedside of her sister, who lay sobbing and moaning in the extremity of her fearful grief, and the darkness that shrouded her young life. And the little one was comforted as she felt those dear arms twine softly around her, and heard the loving words of consolation whispered in her ear ty the beloved voice, and she sank to sleep, her sorrow all forgotten, with her head pillowed on that bosom whose deeper grief she little comprehended.

The Audleys were rich but friendless. The orphan girls, when they returned from laying their mother in the grave, knew that the broad ocean rolled between them and all their kindred. There were but two persons to whom Grace could turn for counsel—the clergyman of the parish, whose voice had just pronounced the burial-service at her mother's grave, and the eminent lawyer, by whom, since her husband's death, the widow's affairs had all been managed. And these two had been named the guardians of her children.

For a few days these gentlemen were busily employed in examining the late Mrs. Audley's papers, and arranging the affairs of their joint trust. During these days Mr. Whyte was a guest at the parsonage, but no sooner was the business ended than he hurried away to his city home.

Before he went, however, the kind-hearted, bustling man found time to say a few words of cheerful import to the orphans.

"You are looking pale, Miss Audley," he said, "and worn. Don't fret, or let your burdens of sorrow and care weigh you down. You would not wish your mother's return to sufferings such as she endured in her last days. You are young yet, and though the burden that is laid upon you is heavy, you must bear it with the elasticity that belongs to your years. I hope to see you looking well and cheerful when I come down a little before christmas. And then you must be ready to return with me to the city, and pay Mrs. Whyte a visit. There is a wonderful new doctor just arrived, with diplomas from all the societies, and orders from all the sovereigns of Europe. I shall see if he can do anything for Alice, and if so you must bring her to be put under his care."

"You are very, very kind, Mr. Whyte," Grace answered, gratefully, "but I cannot think of leaving home this winter, unless for Alice's sake. Mamma, you know, consulted the best physicians for her, but if this one can be of any service I shall not think of myself, but come at once."

"Well, well, my dear, we shall see. If we can bring sight to those pretty eyes once more, nothing will be too great a sacrifice. I shall see the doctor at once, and if his answer is favorable will tell Mrs. Whyte to make all needful preparations for you. So keep your mind in the hope of the child's restoration."

So saying, and bidding his youthful wards a kindly farewell, Mr. Whyte hurried away to the station.

Very lonely and sad were the days that followed. Every object, animate and inanimate, about her home continually reminded Grace of her lost mother—there were the dresses she had worn, the books she had read, the chairs upon which she had sat, the piano-forte and harp which had so often returned sweet music to her touch. There were her faithful and attached servants, her pensioners, and the children she had petted, and the sadness in every face too forcibly reminded Grace of her great loss. But, for the sake of the blind child, she resolutely suppressed all signs of outward grief, and bent herself to the task of consoling and attending the little helpless creature to whom she had bound her life. And thus commenced her long years of acrifice.

Ere long came a letter from Mr. Whyte announcing that the new physician expressed himself favorably in regard to the child's case, and that he would see and pronounce an opinion upon it. And Grace gladly commenced her preparations for removal to the city.

The week preceeding Christmas brought Mr. Whyte, as usual cheery and bustling, and Alice, who was very fond of him, said she fancied him just like the sunlight that she had never seen. He hurried the preparations of the sisters, and on Christmas eve Grace found herself established, with Alice and their old nurse, in the comfortable apartments prepared for them by Mrs. Whyte.

Mrs. Whyte was a quiet, gentle woman, the very opposite in manner of her bustling husband, but of a kindly disposition that mated his own. She was rejoiced to welcome the orphan girls to her home. Their coming seemed to fill a void in the large, silent rooms, and partly in her own heart, long ago left desolate by the death of her only child. Cecilia Whyte had died just at the verge of lovely womanhood, the victim of a slight cold taken at school, and neglected, until her parents, summoned at last, only arrived to stand helplessly and grief-stricken beside her dying bed. Ever since the desolate mother had dearly loved young girls, for the lost one's sake.

Leading the shy, trembling Alice by the hand, Grace descended to dinner on the evening of her arrival. She had expected to meet no one but Mr. and Mrs. Whyte, and was therefore surprised to see a third party added to the group which she had left a few minutes previously in the parlor.

Mrs. Whyte came forward to receive her guests, and introduced them to her nephew, Mr. Hugh Melville. As Mr. Melville bowed to her, and gently took the little hand Alice presented (the blind girl's form of salutation), Grace found time to look at him; and many times during the meal that followed, while he sat opposite her at table, her eye rested upon his fine face.

A face not regularly handsome, indeed with scarce a feature that would bear critical inspection, but one illuminated from within by a soul so noble, and bright, and excellent, that one forgot, in looking upon it, to desire the outward form of beauty. So thought Grace then, and after time more than confirmed her first impression. She scarcely acknowledged to herself the pleasure with which she learned he was an inmate of the same house with herself, that she should see him every day, hear his voice, and listen to the earnest, truthful thoughts, in their appropriate garniture of well-chosen words that flowed from his lips.

Unused to analyzing her emotions, Grace believed that the chief pleasure she derived from the presence of Mr. Melville was caused by his kind attentions to Alice, and she felt inexpressibly grateful for the evident and earnest interest he expressed in the result of the morrow's visit to the celebrated physician.

The great man's verdict was favorable when he had made an examination of the blind child's case; she was put immediately under a course of treatment, and it was decided that the Audleys should spend the winter in the city.

It was a very happy winter to Grace—quietly and serenely happy. Not that she had forgotten, or ceased to mourn for her mother; not that the desolation of her orphanage was any less real; not that the burden was in any present degree lifted from her shoulders. But she had hope for Alice, she was surrounded by kind and congenial friends, and, all unknown to herself, the aromal influence of a love deep, intense and strong, was surrounding her; her spirit bathed in it, and gained new strength and beauty, and went out to meet it with silent, unconscious, but fitting return.

So passed away the three months of probation which had been fixed upon ere the necessary operation should be performed. The day arrived, and Grace, nerving herself for the trial, accompanied the child to the apartment which had been prepared for the purpose. Mindful of her vow, and lovingly anxious fully to discharge her trust, she remained, in spite of her sickening horror at what she was compelled to witness, beside the child till all was over, till the last bandage had been applied, and, in the darkness of her own room, the sufferer had been laid to rest. Then, in tearful gratitude too deep for words, she sat down beside the couch, on which lay her young sister, the words of the physician still ringing in her ears.

"All has gone well, Miss Audley, and with proper care, unless some unforeseen symptom intervenes, your sister will, within a few weeks, be quite restored to sight."

Hugh Melville had waited for this, and not many days passed ere he sought and obtained an interview with Grace, in which he told her of his love, and asked her to become his wife.

Grace listened at first with a deep, silent joy, at thought of being chosen from all the world to be the companion of this truly good man, so earnest in thought, and deed, and daily life, so strong, and true to all the highest intuitions of his being. But ere he had finished, and anxiously sought the answer he was too truly modest to believe necessarily favorable, the memory of her vow, and her mother's dying words in solemn explanation of its import, recurred to her.

Pale and trembling, like one compelled to pronounce her own doom, she told him all, her agitation too surely unvailing the secret of her perfect requital of the love bestowed.

A deep shade of gravity, betraying his disappointment and regret, passed over Mr. Melville's face as she spoke. When she had finished he sat silent for a moment; then, as a thought flashed across his mind, the brilliant illumination of renewed hope lighted up his features.

"Have you thought, my dear Miss Audley," he asked, "that an entire change of circumstances, such as would place Alice in quite a different relation to you and to society, would absolve you from a promise based upon her condition at the time it was given?"

Grace gathered hope from his tone and expression, though she failed to comprehend the full bearing of his words.

"Only the death of my poor, patient, suffering sister could relieve me from my charge," she replied, with a feeling of keen contempt for herself, that she should dare to think of such a contingency.

"Rather let us hope, dear Grace, that her restoration to the enjoyment of life's blessings, by rendering her less dependent upon your immediate care and attention, may absolve you from your vow," the lover whispered, and clasping her unresisting form to his breast, he held her there, while she wept tears of hope and joy in the blessed prospect his words had opened to her. And so Grace Audley and Hugh Melville were betrothed.

So, listening to their hopes and wishes, the words were spoken that bound them in a conditional engagement. Once spoken, they dismissed all fears, and abandoned themselves to their dream of perfect joy, never doubting that in a few months the entire recovery of Alice from her malady would leave Grace free to take upon herself the obligations of a wife.

Oh! how swiftly sped those bright and joyous days. Outwardly the world was clothed in the white garments of winter, with its attendant storms and frosts ever at hand; within their hearts, thus united by hallowed hopes, reigned the perpetual summer-time of love—a radiant, blissful summer-time, of which they feared no end.

From day to day the reports of Alice's state continued favorable, and the time approached when the trial would be over, and the power of sight tested, and, as her friends hoped, confirmed. In the midst of these hopes Grace was awakened one night by the restlessness of the child, who shared her couch. Supposing this caused by some slight indisposition, and unable to gather anything from the half-wakened child's incoherent answers to her questions, Grace soon slept again.

But at morning all her fears were aroused by the child's complaints of a sharp, burning pain in one of her eyes. The physician was hurriedly summoned, his examination made, and the verdict a sudden and acute inflammation, for which he could assign no cause. The "unforeseen symptoms" had intervened.

He looked grave, but did not mention all his fears, and having prescribed such remedies as were needed, went his way. Alas! a few days revealed the extent of the danger. The inflammation communicated to the other eye, suppuration followed, and, on the day which had been originally fixed for testing the efficiency of the operation, and the perfection of the cure, it was whispered in that sorrowing circle, that Alice was totally, hopelessly, incurably blind.

May not Grace be pardoned if, even in that hour that fixed forever the dark desolation of her sister's fate, she thought of her own sweet, blighted hopes, and the sorrow that must fall upon him who had become so dear to her heart? With a terrible, but silent struggle, such as we wonder any frail woman can survive, and such as we know many a frail woman does not survive, to carry for all the years of her life a desolate, aching heart, Grace accepted her duty, and took up the burden of her sacrifice. In a long, sad farewell, those young hearts were wrenched asunder, and Hugh Melville departed from his uncle's house, and shortly after from his native land, with the prospect of an indefinite absence, which he cared not, since Grace would not welcome his return, ever to end.

And Grace turned resolutely and lovingly to her duty—her life-work was before her, the occupation of the long monotonous years that stretched before her. And Alice, exacting and impatient at times, yet ever loving and grateful save in her hours of greatest suffering, never knew how much she owed the sister who was henceforth the kindly Providence of her darkened life.

Year after year, and lustrum after lustrum rolled away, ere Grace Audley's life-work was finished. Then another funeral moved from the Audley cottage, and, beside her mother, the blind girl was laid to rest. Her innocent, suffering life, unblessed save by her sister's self-sacrificing love, was ended, and Grace, at last, was free!

But freedom brought no hope, but only pain and added desolation. For long ago, Hugh Melville, unable to bear the loneliness of his life, and despairing of ever being able to win the companionship of his early love, had married another. Report made him a happy husband and father, and his sphere of life seemed far removed from that in which Grace Audley's solitary maiden life was henceforth to be passed.

Grace had always shrunk from meeting him whom she had so loved, since his return to his native land with the wife whom he had married abroad. But Mr. Whyte, whose friendship had not ended with his guardianship, insisted, on the winter following the death of Alice, that she should pay one more visit at the house, and thus break the desolate monotony of her life. Unable to refuse his solicitations, and the kind messages of his invalid wife, she accompanied him home. And there, just twenty years from the Christmas eve on which she first met Hugh Melville, she again found herself his vis-a-vis at the hospitable lawyer's well-spread table.

The meeting swept away at once the illusions and dreams of twenty years. The portly man of forty-five, surrounded by a numerous family, and devoted to a languid, invalid wife, was so little like the lover of her youth, that Grace was at once relieved of her long enchantment. There had been a slight, mutual embarrassment in the meeting, but, long ere the evening had passed, they found themselves conversing with the pleasant familiarity of old friendship. There could be no repulsion between those who had once loved so truly, and now that the love of youth was replaced by the refined friendship of mature years, it became to both a source of the deepest and purest joy.

Grace was no longer desolate. The large and active benevolence of her friend was often called to her aid in the schemes she had vaguely planned for the disposal of her great wealth for the benefit of the suffering and oppressed. Mr. Melville gladly became the almoner of her bounty, her counsellor in difficulties, her friendly guide in nearly all the duties and pleasures of her life. This relation still continues. Both stand now upon the extreme verge of age, in undiminished regard, looking back with few regrets upon well-spent lives, and reaching forward with hope, into a future which promises them the reward of duties well and carefully performed, and the beatitudes of the meek and pure in heart.

THE SCOFFER.

Oft have I scoffed at passion's power,
While writhing 'neath its smart—
Have laughed and jested many an hour
With agonizing heart.

Have boasted Love had not the power
To make *me* own his sway,
Even while his chain was on my soul,
Wearing my life away.

And I will ever scoff and smile
The world shall never know
How, far beneath what meets its gaze,
There dwells a cureless woe.

FLATTERY.

That society is often based upon false principles, yielding the palm of preference to those whose external appearance may be most pleasing to the artificial eye, is clearly proved by the knowledge of the customs of almost every people. The diamond often dazzles far more than the lustre of mind; while he, whose mind is stored with useful knowledge and decorated in homelier attire, is often excluded from the presence of those who would arrogate to themselves all claims to superiority.

But what is it that has given the worthless and avaricious such a potent charm, in keeping the artificial link of society bright? It is flattery! The designing use this weapon when all others fail. The miser pours it out upon those whose purse he would shorten; the politician deals liberally with encomiums upon the people, from whom he derives the emoluments or honor of office. The love of approbation is innate in the constitution of man; its sparks are first kindled in the bosom of the cradled infant, glowing with intense power, until manhood has developed its faculties. Young has described it thus:

"*The love of praise*, howe'er concealed by art,
Reigns, more or less, and glows in every heart;
The proud to gain it, toils on toils endure;
The modest shun it, but to make it sure.
O'er globes and sceptres, now on thrones it swells,
Now trims the midnight lamp in college cells;
'Tis tory, whig; it plots, prays, preaches, pleads,
Harangues in senates, squeaks in masquerades,
It aids the dancer's heel, the writer's head,
And heaps the plain with mountains of the dead,
Nor ends with life, but nods in sable plumes,
Adorns our hearse, and flatters on our tombs."

Such is the love of praise, and by a kind of instinct we naturally think well of those who administer to our vanity, and shun those who dwell on disparagements against us, and who regard us with an envious eye. Thus it is that the deceitful, by taking advantage of this frailty of human nature, gain an ascendancy over our affections which would have been produced by no other artifice. Many a heart has bled with the arrow of Cupid, which was sent upon its winged message by the breath of flattery; many a fire has glowed upon the altar of Hymen, which has been fanned by its mystic influence; but it never won one sensible heart, nor kindled one true fire! Nevertheless, it has left many a heart with an aching void, and deceived many into regions of fancy who had been borne upon its light, fluctuating wings.

HOW TO ACQUIRE KNOWLEDGE.

To the acquisition of extensive knowledge, incessant application and industry are necessary. Nothing great or good has been achieved without them. Be willing then to labor; be not satisfied with superficial attainments, and accustom yourself to habits of accurate and thorough investigation. Explore the foundations and first principles of every science. It is observed by Locke, that "there are fundamental truths that lie at the bottom—the basis upon which a great many others rest—and in which they have their consistency; there are teeming truths, rich in the stores with which they furnish the mind, and like the lights of heaven, are not only beautiful and interesting in themselves, but give light and evidence to other things, that without them could not be seen or known." These are the truths with which we should endeavor to enrich our minds. Be select in your reading—become familiar with the writings of the great master spirits of the world, who will enrich your mind with profound, enlarged and exalted views; and who, while they form you to habits of just and noble thinking, will also teach you to cherish pure and generous feelings. If you would make these thorough acquisitions, you must guard against immoderate indulgence of your passions, and the seductions of evil companions. A life of dissipation and pleasure is death to superior excellence. A body invigorated by habits of temperance and self-denial, and a mind undisturbed by unholy passions, serene and cheerful in conscious rectitude, are most powerful auxiliaries in the pursuit of science.

DON'T FRET.

It is unamiable. A fretting man or woman is one of the most unlovely objects in the world. A wasp is a comfortable house-mate in comparison—it only stings when disturbed. But an habitual fretter buzzes if he don't sting, with or without provocation. "It is better to dwell in the corner of a house-top than with a brawling woman, and in a wide house." It is useless; it sets no broken bones, stops no leaks, gathers no spilt milk, cements no smashed pictures, cures no spoiled hay, and changes no east winds. It affects nobody but the fretter himself. Children or servants cease to respect the authority or obey the commands of a complaining, worrisome, exacting parent or master. They know that "barking dogs don't bite," and fretters don't strike; and they conduct themselves accordingly.

ALONE IN LIFE.

What in the world is more discouraging than the feeling that in our struggle through life, in our trials, and our disappointments, there are none to sympathise or care for us? No man can go very far with unabated strength, courage, and cheer, if he goes *alone*.

We are made to be rendered happier and better by each other's notice, appreciation, help, and praise; and the hearts that are debarred from these influences inevitably wither, harden, or *break*.

Here and there are found persons who, from pride, contrariness, or from very sensitiveness, (which they thus seek to hide) affect to be altogether independent of the notice and regard of their fellow-beings; but it's a very safe assertion to make, that never yet was there one human heart that did not, at some time, and in some tender and yearning hour, long for the sympathy of other hearts. And there is *nobility* in this feeling. It is the offspring of God. Even He, all perfect as he is, cannot be satisfied without sympathy and love. And in this truth we may find a key to an awful mystery. No *forced* admiration and affection would have pleased the divine heart, and in order to obtain *voluntary* love, spontaneous sympathy and homage, those creatures from whom He desired it *must* be made able freely to think, will, and act—*able* to hate and repel their Maker, as well as to clasp Him with the arms of love and worship. Only thus would their love be of any value to Him who wooes them from the cradle to the grave, for God is just like man in *this* that He *cannot* value forced gifts. 'Tis the free offering—the free, generous love of the heart that touches the springs of joy in the receiving heart. And there is not in the wide universe a being above the brutes (and who knows that they are exceptions) that can be positively *happy* unless he be sympathised with and loved.

G. H.

OBSCURE PASSAGES IN THE BIBLE.

A gentleman who visits with great regularity the Philadelphia penitentiary, the inmates of which his piety prompts him to instruct, had given a Bible to a convict, who would ask him at each visit, with much shrewdness, some difficult question formed from passages of the sacred volume, each time declaring he would not go on if this was not explained to him. The gentleman was unable to persuade him that it would be best for him first to dwell upon those passages which he could easily understand, and which plainly applied to his situation. After many fruitless trials to induce the convict to this course, his friendly teacher said: "What would you think of a very hungry man who had not eaten a morsel of food for the last twenty-four hours, and was asked by a charitable man to come in and sit down at a richly covered table, on which were large dishes of choice meat, and also covered ones, the contents of which the hungry man did not know. Instead of satisfying his exhausted body with the former, he raises one cover after another, and insists on finding out what these unknown dishes are composed of. In spite of all the advice of the charitable man to partake first of the more substantial dishes, he dwells with obstinate inquiry on nicer compounds, until, overcome by exhaustion, he drops down. What do you think of such a man?" "He is a fool," said the convict, "and I will be one no longer; I understand you well."

FORMATION OF CHARACTER.

Guard against self-sufficiency and vanity. This temper is an effectual barrier to high intellectual improvements. Frequently reflect upon the small extent and imperfection of your attainments on the vast regions of science that are yet unexplored by you; on the ten thousand books that you have never read or seen, or of which perhaps you have not even heard. Remember too the lofty attainments that have been made by some profound scholars both of ancient and modern days. Read in early life, a few well-selected biographies of men who were distinguished for their general knowledge. Read the lives of Demosthenes, of Newton, of Milton, of Locke, of Hale, of Addison, of Haller, of Doddridge, of Johnson, and of other accomplished and illustrious scholars. Observe the ardent attachment and intense industry with which they cultivated science, and the astonishing acquirements which they made—their high valuation of time and careful improvement of it; compare your habits and attainments with theirs—not to repose in sluggish despondency, but to rouse yourself from apathy and sloth, to a noble emulation of rising to an equality with them. It was by no secret magic that these mighty scholars attained to distinction and fame; it was by patient, persevering, untiring industry

JEALOUSY.

Avarice, ambition, terror, may have mercy; but there is one passion lurks within the human breast whose very instinct is murder. Once lodged within the heart, for life it rules—ascendant and alone! it sports in the solitude like an antic fiend! It pants for blood, and rivers will not sate its thirst. Minds strongest in worth and valor stoop to meanness and disgrace before it. The meanest soul—the weakest—it can give courage to, beyond the daring of despair! What is the sting which no balm can assuage? What is the wound that death alone can heal? Whose is the sword that, when once drawn, the scabbard must be cast away for ever? When is it that man has no ear but for the tale that falls like molten lead upon his ear; no eye but for the plucked-out heart of him he hates; no hand but for that clutch—that one last clutch—that grasps his dagger? Who is it that has been wise, yet now will cast away reason; was kind and pitiful, yet now mimics the humanity of the wild dog? Who is it hews his foe to pieces—writes "Acquittal" on his tomb—and dies? That wretch is Jealous! Pity him, whate'er his crimes. The gamester, whose last piece is lost—the merchant, whose whole risk the sea has swallowed up—the child, whose air-bubble has burst—may each create a bauble like the former! But he whose treasure was in woman's love; who trusted, as man once trusts, and was deceived!—that hope once gone!—weep—search—rave—despair—seek thyself blind—there is again no finding—no restoring it!

VANITY OF WORLDLY GRANDEUR.—Lady Colquhoun relates, on the authority of her father, Sir J. Sinclair, that on one occasion he was invited by Lord Melville, then high in office, to spend New Year's Day with him. Sir John arrived the day before, and in the morning repaired to the chamber of his host to wish him a happy New Year. "It had need be happier than the last," replied Lord M., "for I cannot recollect a single happy day in it." And this, observes Lady C., was the man who was the envy of many, being considered at the hight of worldly prosperity!

AN UPRIGHT JUDGE.—"I do think," says a late English writer on law, "that there is not in nature a more glorious, heavenly sight than an upright, patient, knowing judge sitting in judgment. If God ever made man after his own image, I think he must have made him in that character."

NEW YORK LEDGER

ROBERT BONNER, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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OUT IN THE FIELDS.

Verily, in this blossoming season of the year it is something to be a denizen of the country, a sojourner in the midst of "green fields and pastures ever new"—a lord of the land. The May month, crowned with the garland of delicatest blooms, with all her valleys and hill sides aglow with the young verdure of the renewing year, is a glorious month—and for many a year was never more fresh, and blooming, and glorious than now. Here in the pent city, we can only faintly fancy the picture "out in the fields." Not an orchard, but "scents to heaven" from its myriad blossoms, with odorous prophecy of a bountiful fruit harvest when the golden autumn shall come; not a lawn, but exhales purest fragrance from shrub and tree; not a garden, but waves its flowers in token of gladness for sunshine and shower; not a bird, bee, or brook, but winds out in nature's great anthem its most musical cadences, while the brown-handed farmer strides athwart his growing domain, gazing proudly over his pomp of grain fields and meadows, thanking God for His bounteous blessing of old mother earth, whose bosom yields such unfailing nurture and delight to man.

But all metaphor aside, it is the general testimony of the country that the season has been most propitious, thus far, for the tiller of the soil. Earlier, warmer, and evener in temper than usual, the Spring has unfolded her rarest facilities and gifts to the cultivator, and seldom, if ever, were the grain fields, gardens, and orchards so universally forward. More planting over all the land was never known at this season, and it is all in the most promising condition. The vegetable kingdom is unprecedentedly advanced, and of berries and fruit there is no end of present prophecy. To appreciate the hopeful splendor of the farm-world, one must fly the city and go "out in the fields." There all is fragrant, musical, magnificent. No crisis, no panic, no bankruptcy in the green and flowering dominions of nature.

How truly is the farmer the "lord of the land." Who so useful, so certain in his toil, so independent, so healthy, so cheerful and happy as he? Whether he wake or sleep, his fields, and gardens, and orchards, bring forth their harvests, and his flocks and herds their increase. Beauty and fragrance wait upon his footsteps, and wherever he walks abroad, are pictures to delight the eye, and exalt, and purify the reflective soul. The bounty, the perpetual care and goodness of God, are no where so visible and impressive as "out in the fields." Though it be our lot at present to delve in the city, shut from the gladdening scenes of nature, and the kindly influences of open landscape, shimmering waters and fresh air, we cannot forego the daily hope that it will yet be our fate to ruralize "out in the fields," and we momently feel the deepest sympathy with the poet who sings—

"O give me a cot in the valley I love,
A tent in the greenwood, a home in the grove."

"GUDGEONS."

The gudgeon is described, by nautical historians, as a small, fresh-water fish, whose pecular characteristic is that it is very easily caught. It is not only lacking in the caution of other fishes—particularly the trout, which is its opposite in this respect—but also in the power, if not the disposition, of resistence to the angler. Indeed, like the lamb among quadrupeds, it is a practical non-resistant.

Who will say there are not people who would aptly be designated, figuratively, as gudgeons? Do we not find them at every turn, in business and social life? These are they who are easily caught by the wiley. When caught and "done for," they make no resistence. Not because they are conscientiously opposed to defending themselves, but by reason of their want of manly courage, or their ignorance of ways and means and the relations of things. If there were no "drop games," or mock auctions, these gudgeons would be "caught" in other ways. It is their "manifest destiny." And yet their career and their fate are not without their lesson. They may show the need of parents not only giving their children a good school education, but of also affording them the aids of the family press, that they may be "forewarned" of the hooks and nets, set for the ignorant and the unwary, by a *living knowledge* of men and things—and it has been well said, "forewarned, forearmed."

It is ignorance of practical life which furnishes the waters wherein social gudgeons are found, and in which those who live by catching them go a fishing. To dry up, or drain, all such is the only mode of preventing their prevalence and their fate.

MANNERS.

A country paper, (whose editor, by the way, is angry at us because we have not advertised in his journal,) finds fault with the LEDGER, and sneeringly remarks, among other things, that our answers to correspondents are chiefly devoted to teaching young people manners and other silly things. Did it never occur to this country editor that manners are even of more importance than laws. Upon them, in a great measure, the laws depend. The law touches us but here and there, now and then. Manners are what vex or sooth, corrupt or purify, exalt or debase, barbarise or refine us, by a constant, steady, uniform, insensible operation, like that of the air we breathe in—they give their whole form and color to our lives—according to their quality they aid morals, they supply them, or they totally destroy them.

THE DEAD.

How multitudinous are the dead! How populous the silent cities where they dwell! Close, but peaceful they rest, under shafts and spires of marble, or perchance without even the rudest memorial to the activities they once bore, the pomps they once displayed. Two hundred times more than all the generation of the living, encamped out there in church-yard, cemetery, and by the way-side. Myriad millions, obeisant to the awful shade, the grim spectre who rides the pale horse. Ceaseless migration from the halls of life—the great, the proud, the rich, the poor, the bond, the free; brothers and sisters all, with one God for their common father, one earth for their sepulchre, one turf to hide their dust. What history, what romance, what tragedy, what secrets and mysteries are locked with them in the grave.

And how soon, too, shall we all march down thither, "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest;" down thither where the sleep is dreamless, until the great day when the trumpet shall sound, bidding the nations of the dead to arise! Sacred, and green, and evermore fragrant with the breath of flowers, and musical with the sound of gentlest foot-falls, and the songs of birds, be the places of graves—the homes of the dead. They were all beloved in their day—all fathers, or mothers, or brothers, or sisters, or friends—or if any were foes, their enmity lives not in the tomb. Good or bad, as ran the record of their lives, be it ours to reverence their dust—God will judge them; God, who is the searcher of hearts, and who is wiser, and more merciful than man.

Verily, it is not well for us to be thoughtless of the dead. What they were, and what they have done and said, concern us every hour. Their example guides, their precedent governs, their wisdom directs, their thoughts inspire, their labor blesses, and their riches enrich us. Benizon to the dead, and may the good God so shape our lives, that when the time comes, we may lie down, obscure it may be, but without fear and without reproach.

TROUBLE BREWING.

Nominally quiet, and apparently at peace with herself and the world, yet Europe gives signs of chronic trouble seething and brewing in her old and decaying bones. Corrupt and effete in her governments and institutions, all the skill of all her diplomatic leeches can scarcely keep her rash, ill humors from breaking out. At best, they lie only skin deep, where the slightest "poke" or puncture will fetch the whole warring distemper to the surface. France and Austria look defiantly at each other—Italy and Hungary give the poor Hapsburgher no peace—John Bull is sore and irritable toward his Gallic neighbor, spite of protestations to the contrary; and Russia, sly and stealthy, and nursing a great destiny, rebuilds her fleets, and tickles or irritates the "sick man" at Constantinople, while England, France, Russia and Brother Jonathan join hands to pull the "pig-tails" of the diamond-eyed, often foolish, but, after all, pretty well civilized Celestials.

Europe will not keep the peace long. She has a "chip on the shoulder," and various other parties are looking for a good chance to knock it off. Louis Napoleon, but for his repressive guards and forces, doesn't count his head worth an hour of time, and we venture to predict that he estimates correctly. Only one power in Europe—and that is half Asiatic—is really strong, safe, and progressing. That power is Russia. She alone is young and vigorous, and instead of retrograding toward eras of whips and chains—fruitful of revolutions for empires, and assassinations for emperors—is moving forward, developing her people, making men of her serfs, and by a careful adoption of all the nobler arts and truer industries, preparing to lead the civilization of the Old World. *Amelioration* is her motto, and it will lead her to conquests more glorious and lasting than ever blossomed from thrones at the beck of the despot's sword.

THE SEASON OF FLOWERS.

The season of flowers is now at hand. And how lovely the associations it brings with it! It is true, these associations are not vouchsafed to all. In the great city—great in all that belongs to commerce and art, but little in this respect—they are wanting to thousands. Immured by bricks and mortar, as they are, this is their fate. There is no help for them.

Not so in the country—the green open country, which God himself has made—for, as the saying is, God made the country, and man the city. There anybody may enjoy the blessings of fair Flora's kingdom. They may behold flowers of every hue and odor, by the wayside, even to say nothing of the garden, the meadow, and the grove, and snuff their perfume. This they may do without trouble. But, besides, there is not a rural home-spot where more or less room might not be found for their culture. Let them be cultivated by all means!

In their flower-culture, we hope our country friends will not forget the roses, of which a sentimental writer has asked, "Who has ever pictured to himself any enchanting scene, but he furnished it with a rose?" The commonness of the flower has been pointed to as a proof of God's impartiality to his children. Its commonness endangers its proper appreciation, we fear. Yet it should not. It never could, on the part of such as consider of how many virtues, graces, and accomplishments the rose is symbolical. These may be, in part, enumerated as love, joy, beauty, innocence, modesty, youth, and refinement!

Let us all be thankful to a bountiful Providence for the spring, and enjoy its blessings while we may? Communion with the flowers cannot possibly make any human being worse. It *ought* to make him better as well as happier.

UNMARRIED FEMALES IN FRANCE.

Married women are everything in France—the unmarried nothing. Whenever you see a gentleman and lady engaged in conversation together, you may conclude, with unerring certainty, that the lady is married. However many handsome unmarried ladies may be present in a company, no one pays any attention to them. They are left to waste their sweetness beside their mammas or aunts. Or, if a gentleman happens to speak at all to any of them, it is in the coldest and most measured imaginable terms. Every word must be as fit for the mother, or for the matron who has charge of a young lady, as for the young lady herself. An unmarried lady is never allowed, under any possible circumstances, to be a single moment in the company of a gentleman, except in the presence of her mamma, or some other matronly relative. She is never suffered to cross, alone, the threshold of her father's house, or the boarding-school of which she is an inmate. She is, in effect, as much a prisoner as if she were formally under the charge of a keeper. Even in the presence of her mamma, or the near relative who may be her guardian, she is expected to be exceedingly distant and reserved when in the society of men.

FRESH FERN LEAVES.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1855, by ROBERT BONNER, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Southern District of New York.

A CHAPTER FOR THE BRETHREN.

Do *gentlemen* ever—spit—in the presence of women? I see plenty of *men* who do it—whose coats, hats, boots, gloves and linen, are as unexceptionable as I wish their manners were; but do *gentlemen* ever do it? that's what I want to know. I am not taking Chesterfield for my model; that hoary old sinner, who spent all his life polishing his head, and who could coolly sit down with one foot in the grave, to teach his son how to debauch women, and even taunt him with the modesty, which, thank God, the young man could not at once throw overboard as worthless cargo, even at the bidding of that accomplished old villain his father; I hate the hollow-hearted, diplomatic, surface-politeness he inculcates, and after which so many of his own corrupt stamp have patterned, and do pattern. I hate, too, when I set down in the cars opposite a nice, loveable looking man, whom it is quite a pleasure to look at, to have those feelings changed at once into intense disgust by his spitting over my shoulder out of the window, or in the straw at my feet; (oh that straw, which I never bury my gaiter-boot in, without a shuddering horror)! The offender's luxuriant whiskers, which but a moment before were quite captivating, now look like an old shoe-brush; his eyes are very common orbs; his mouth, heaven forbid a woman's should ever come in contact with it after such a bar-room indecency; he might talk like a seraph, and I should be as deaf as if he asked me what Mr. Bonner pays me for my articles.

I can't help it. It gives me a mental as well as a physical nausea; it is a disgusting disrespect to every woman present; and I see no more reason why men, more than they, should contract such a habit. Good sirs—Handsome sirs—Well-coated, Well-booted, Well-pantalooned—Otherwise loveable sirs—Will you desist?

It is such a pity you won't; you do so many good and gallant things; and that is why I take the pains to improve your manners, though I know at this moment you are inwardly saying words which a minister would'nt approve! You sometimes bring the tears into my eyes, by cheerfully giving up your seat when you are very tired, to some poor, old, unattractive woman; or some over-burdened mother, with an infant in her arms, looking wistfully round for a seat; or as good-naturedly you crush in your hat and dislocate your neck, while you hand up some poor girl's omnibus fare, and then carefully count her change for her, to see that it is all right; or when returning weary and footsore from the city at night, laden with parcels, you stop at the ferry to buy a bouquet, to carry home to your wife; though the girl who sells them is *not* pretty, and though you may lose one boat by it.

These are sweet and good actions, which often beautify your rugged manhood as does the climbing clematis the sturdy oak around which it twines its fragrant blossoms. They make my heart throb with a sweet, strange pleasure, though I may see but for a passing moment in a whole life-time the man who performs them, though I know no more of his name, or history, than he does that he has given me pleasure, and why.

"Are women perfect?" Not at all; we, or rather *they*, don't—(I solemnly declare *I* do)—thank you for your little civilities; we—I mean *they*—take much more than their fair share of room in cars and omnibusses; and talk any quantity of weary nonsense then and there in your hearing about fringe, and lace, and buttons, and basques. They smother you with patchouli, musk, jockey club, etc., which is almost as nauseating as the dead tobacco smoke in your clothes and hair. *They* seem to think you ought to be everlastingly obliged to them for letting you get up in a crowded church and give them your seat, while you stand on one leg during the entire service; (N. B. You are not so much to be pitied when Henry Ward Beecher preaches.) *They* ought to be ashamed of themselves for doing these uncivil, unladylike, and inexcusable things; but, good sirs, I pray you, don't reward us who *are* civil, who *do* thank you, who want to like you. by ——— spitting upon us.

FANNY FERN.

A REAL NOBILITY.

While a shallow-pated class, who have nothing to boast, in and of themselves, hunt heraldly to find the coats-of-arms of sires, who, not unfrequently, had no coats to their arms, and parade the same on their seals and panels, as though such reminiscences of the dead could ennoble the living, there is in our country a real nobility. Aye, thousands and tens of thousands, who, scorning to delve for crowns or coronets in the world of ancestry, or to owe aught of their social stature to the names and deeds of dead men, proclaim their royalty of manhood by daily deeds of honest toil, that win and carry an independence, a nobility, and a self-sovereignty, such as no regal monarch can boast. These noblemen are our hardy, virtuous, intelligent, free American farmers, mechanics, and toilers in whatever useful field. Holding the plough, wielding the sledge-hammer, or ringing out the anthem of industry with the trowel and the axe, no revolution can put down this nobility. Their strongholds are not feudal castles, and they owe nought for broad lands, to ancient robbery. Their palaces, the creation of their own stout hands; their acres, the purchase of their own honestly earned coin; their vines and fig trees, of their own planting, and their indomitable will to do, and to be, as men among men—good as the best and proud as the proudest—these are their possessions, whose title none can dispute, and which yield an independence more sturdy than marauding baron ever knew. These men—these true nobles, holding the patents of their nobility direct from God, care not for the coat-of-arms of their ancestry, but rather care and strive for honestly earned coats to cover their own arms. This nobility will stand, while all the castles of feudal ages, rotting piece-meal, will perish and be forgotten in the swift-coming golden age of true manhood.

PRAYING SAILORS.

During the great religious awakening of the past few months, among no class of people were so many converts made as among sailors. This is certainly gratifying. To see a ship's company assembled at public worship is a fine spectacle. Every feeling mind must rejoice to see the deck of a large vessel covered with her crew, in the humble attitude of devotion, surrounded by the boundless ocean, the foundation of their august temple, and the cerulean expanse of Heaven, its magnificent canopy! to see them in the midst of this unstable element, when separated from their friends, adoring the universal Friend and Father of the creation, who maketh the clouds his chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind; who raiseth the tempest, and sayeth to the raging waves, "Peace, be still!"

PARTY SPIRIT.

Who that has, perchance, before the present epoch in the history of our great country, succeeded in persuading himself that parties are not a source of much evil, whatever of good they bring forth, can doubt any longer as to the baleful influence of party spirit?

Look at Washington! Look at Albany! Behold the servants of the "dear people," (*before* election!) how they have used the people's time! The Legislators of the Empire State, it is admitted, on all hands, have done nothing worthy of their true functions. A large portion of the first part of the session, just closed, was wasted in a triangular contest for the official control of the Assembly, and the "spoils." That contest once over, the public had a right to expect that the members would go to work, and *do* something worth paying their per diem for. And yet they have, in the main, given us loud promises instead of laws—mere talk, talk, talk!—and "nothing else!" And yet it is agreed that there were a number of interests, general as well as local, that imperatively demand action!

How much better do we find legislative affairs in Congress? There, the greater part of the session has been wrangled away over "Kansas," with a question involved which it would not require an hour to settle, if three practical, fair-dealing, business men had it in charge as arbitrators! And no trifling portion of the rest of it has been spouted away in the consideration of the proper ways and means of protecting life in the National Metropolis!—the *necessity* for which the rowdy example of their own members, not a few of them, has created, in a great measure!

It is recorded of a dumb son of the ancient millionaire, Crœsus, that after many years of utter speechlessness, on seeing one of the soldiers of Cyrus about to slay his father, his filial emotions were so violent that they actually loosened his tongue, and caused him to shout in a voice which saved the victim's life! The people of the State and the Nation have long appeared to be equally dumb. When, if ever, they come to see that the best interests of the country—may be, its very liberties—are in danger, perhaps they will shout loud enough to be heard and heeded at both Albany and Washington!

"WESTWARD, HO!"

If any one lacks appreciation of the rapidity of our imperial spread westward, he needs but to take a glance at the subscription books of some widely circulating paper, to satisfy himself that it is truly wonderful, even in this age of wonders. Not a week passes during which we do not receive orders for the LEDGER from settlements—some of them claiming to be young cities—whereof the latest edition of the most comprehensive gazetteer fails to afford the least information whatever!

"Westward the star of empire takes its way," and "Westward, ho!" is the motto on the flag of triumph which it illumes! From the time when this mighty continent, clothed with forests, appeared as a dreary, inhospitable expanse to the eyes of the first European settlers, each revolving year has witnessed a new creation, only more wonderful than that of its predecessor. About it there is nothing shadowy—nothing imaginary. Everything exhibits substantiality of value and the unmistakeable evidence of a mental as well as a material progress. Behold the towns and cities that have, in so short a space of time, sprung up, as it were, in the bosom of a wilderness! Mark their lofty spires, pointing to the skies—their stately structures devoted to commerce, literature and art—their immense workshops, where varied machinery is doing the work of the human hand—their printing establishments, where the press is throwing off the representatives of its mighty power—their widely reaching and diverging railroads, on which the steam-horse prances so proudly—and the telegraphic lines, over which intelligence flies, upon the wings of electricity, from one end of the country to the other, executing the will of millions of earnest men bent on their several schemes of business or pleasure!

"Westward, ho!" is the motto which ever expresses the spirit of all this progress. The "west" of to-day will have *its* "west" to-morrow, where cities shall spring up almost as if by magic—aye, and a magic indeed it is, wielded by brains and arms which know no such word as "fail."

ACCEPTABLE "GAMMON."

The curious visitor to Litchfield, England, says a correspondent, beyond tracing the homes and haunts of Dr. Johnson, Garrick, Mary Wortley Montague, and the near-by birth-place of Andre, will not fail to be interested in the ancient "Gammon"-ing, instituted centuries ago in the parish of Dunmow. Some quaint old Saxon or Norman devised to the priory of Dunmow the means of giving a "gammon," or flitch of Bacon, to each and every married couple of the parish who could swear that they had lived a twelve-month and a day, without contention or difference. The chronicles of the parish state that three gammons were thus presented prior to the suppression of the religious (monkish) establishments—the first in the twenty-third of Henry the Sixth, and three since—the last in the year 1751. The devise is still in force, but no claimants have appeared within the past century. The claimants had to take the following oath, to secure the gammon:

"You shall swear by custom of confession,
That you ne'er made nuptial transgression;
Nor since you were married man and wife,
By household brawls or contentious strife.
Or otherwise at bed or at board,
Offended each other in deed or in word,
Or since the parish-clerk said amen,
Wished yourselves unmarried again
Or in a twelve-month and a day,
Repented not in thought any way;
But continued true in thought and desire,
As when you joined hands in holy quire.
If to these conditions without all fear
Of your own accord you will freely swear,
A whole Gammon of Bacon you shall receive,
And bear it hence with our love and good leave;
For this is our custom at Dunmow well known;
Though the pleasure be ours, the Bacon's your own."

AN IMPUDENT OUTRAGE.

The editor and musical critic of a weekly journal (Porter's Spirit) of this city, who had *purchased* tickets to a concert at the Academy of Music, were recently excluded therefrom, because their paper had published unfavorable or independent criticisms of previous performances at the Academy, and were even arrested and taken off to a Station House for attempting to present their tickets for admission, on the ground that they *might* create disturbance. Such an indignity upon members of the editorial profession, and such an outrage upon the rights of citizens, should meet with the unqualified condemnation of the Press and the public; and we are glad that the impudent manager who perpetrated this gross wrong, has already been made to feel that he cannot safely trifle thus with the privileges of American citizens. The audacity of the fellow is to us inexplicable on any other hypothesis than that of unmitigated snobbery. But we rejoice to know that, in this country, public spirit is such that an insolent and tyrannical manager like this Ullmann is sure to be consigned to his proper level.

WIT AND WISDOM.

ORIGINAL AND SELECTED—PREPARED EXPRESSLY FOR THE LEDGER BY GEO. D. PRENTICE.

AN editor, we believe a very worthy one, who has started a new political paper, gives his reasons for undertaking the perilous enterprise. He says, "the aspects of the political horizon are portentous; the clouds are gathering, the lightnings are flashing, the thunders are rolling through the sky; and therefore we have decided to buckle on our armor and do battle for the right." Never before in all our lives did we hear of a man's buckling on his armor and rushing forth to fight *a thunder storm*. What if a thunder-bolt were to hit him and be off so suddenly as to give him no manner of chance to hit back!

A THOROUGH knave will rarely quarrel with one that he can cheat. His revenge is plunder; therefore he is usually the most forgiving of beings, upon the principle that if he come to an open rupture he must defend himself, and this does not suit a fellow whose vocation it is to keep his hands in another's pockets.

MAN, in his highest dignity, may justly call himself the lord of the creation. The beautiful and majestic Earth is his footstool, and he walks between two eternities. God is everywhere round about him, and a beatific immortality is before him.

No one, says dean Loker, will ever shine in conversation who thinks of saying fine things. To please, one must say many things indifferent, and many very bad. This last rule of the Dean's is rarely violated in society.

CHAMFORT very skillfully consoles unsuccessful authors when he says that many a work succeeds because the mediocrity of the writer's idea corresponds exactly with the mediocrity of the public's ideas.

PROBABLY we might often become reconciled to what we consider a hard lot by comparing ourselves with the many who want what we possess rather than with the few who possess what we want.

AN Alabama paper speaks of an institution, nearly all of whose students got grossly intoxicated on the 22d of February. That seems to have been emphatically a *high school*.

"MR. LEMON has come *over* to our party," said a politician exultingly to an opponent. "Well, if your party has nothing stronger than Lemon-aid to recruit with, it must be in a bad way."

"I HAVE been to the Capitol to see your friends swear into office," said a politician to an opponent, on the evening of the fourth of March. "Yes, and I have been to see yours *go swearing out*."

"I TALK of selling my lot," said a man of not very exemplary habits. "Well, I suppose you will sell it very cheap, for I know you have frequently *fallen on it*."

IF a man shuts himself up from society because he is afraid that its contact will contaminate him, society loses nothing by his withdrawal.

A YOUNG stock-broker, having married a very fat old widow worth half a million, said that it wasn't her face that attracted him so much as the *figure*.

"I SHOULDN'T care much about the bugs," said a thin, pale boarder to his landlady, "but the fact is, ma'am, I haint got the blood to spare—you see that yourself."

"WHAT do you propose to take for your cold?" said a lady to a sneezing gentlemen. "Oh, I'll sell very cheap; I won't higgle about the price at all."

THOUGH most of the partisan newspapers are very short-lived, not a few of them are entitled to the consolation of knowing that they have no souls to be damned.

AS the river flows out from under the shadow of the willow that bends over its waters, so the cheerful spirit flashes out from the cloud without bearing it along.

THERE is this good in real evils, they deliver us, while they last, from the petty despotism of all that were imaginary.

THERE are many moral Actæons who are as miserably devoured by objects of their own choosing as the fabulous one was by his hounds.

A MAN, to be wise and healthy, should always carry two good digesters, a good brain and a good stomach—the first to digest his knowledge, the second his victuals.

WE have heard it remarked by a gentleman of taste that the two Miss B's, who write poetry for the LEDGER, are genuine *honey-B's*.

WHEN you hear the phrase, "I may say without vanity," you may be sure some characteristic vanity will follow in the same breath.

IT is said that the difference between a doctor and a magician is that one is a cupper, and the other a sorcerer.

THE attention of young farmers has been called to the fact that the most effectual way to destroy weeds is to marry a widow.

LADIES of fashion starve their happiness to feed their vanity, and their love to feed their pride

"WOULDN'T you know this youth to be my son?" "Oh, yes, the maker's name is stamped on the blade."

CURRENT ITEMS.

AN American ship captain, recently from the coast of Africa, says that while lying at anchor in a small bay on the Guinea coast, his vessel was visited by many of the natives. Among others, a fine-looking, intelligent chief from the interior, with his wife and mother, one day came on board. On returning to the land, their canoe was upset, and the chief, finding that he could not save both of his companions, rescued his mother. Afterwards, on being asked why he did not save his wife instead, he replied: "Me can get another wife, but me could never get another mother.

LATE advices from Oregon and Washington Territories bring news of a savage affray on Frazer's river between a party of gold-diggers and a number of Indians. The latter attempted to steal some of the former's blankets and provisions, were caught in the act, and hence the fight. One white man—a German named Hermann Oeschlager—was wounded, and scalped alive. He presented a horrid spectacle. Six Indians were killed.

THE Wisconsin State Board of Education recently passed a resolution, in which they announce that they shall, as soon as possible, "construct a building large enough to accommodate five hundred students three stories high." The first thing the members of that "Board of Education" should do, is to attend a primary school long enough to learn to "construct" a sentence with common accuracy.

THERE is an old gentleman living in the town of Munroe, Conn., who voted for Washington both times he was a candidate for the Presidency, and for every President since—having, strangely enough, happened to vote the successful ticket at every presidential election since the formation of the United States Government

IT has been ascertained that a whale can travel over sixty miles an hour, a boat attached to a sperm whale in the Pacific having been drawn thirty two miles inside of half an hour. How much faster he might have gone it is impossible to say, but the whalers thought he went at the hight of his speed.

NEWSPAPER correspondents writing from Paris, say that it is generally supposed that Louis Napoleon is meditating war against England, and has sent Marshal Pelissier thither as ambassador, to give the old veteran an opportunity to "spy out the land" preparatory to a sudden attack upon the fast-anchored isle.

THE wife of a wine-dealer in the Rue d'Astorg, Paris, committed suicide, a few weeks ago, by hanging herself in her bedroom. On the table was found a paper addressed to her husband, on which was written, "Pardon me, dear friend, I am mad." The poor woman had recently been ill, and an attack of fever led to the fatal act.

THERE was a brutal encounter between two ruffians at Little Rock, Ark., a short time since, when one of them, named John Burdyne, having got an advantage of his opponent, threw him down, and leaping upon his breast with all his force, killed him instantly.

ONE of the clergymen of Hartford, Conn., says that within three or four weeks past, over one thousand persons have called on him to converse on the subject of religion. That would be an average of between thirty and forty callers daily.

A YOUNG lad named William Fitzmennie was recently arrested in this city for stealing $19,000 in bank notes from his employer. On finding himself in the clutches of the officer, he showed the latter where he had secreted the money, and it was all recovered.

THE country papers are coming down severely on the "gift enterprise" swindlers, some of whom have imposed most shabbily upon our rural cotemporaries. They very properly caution their readers against every project which has the "gift" feature in any way associated with it.

DURING a recent thunderstorm near the town of Harroddsburgh, Miss., a man on horseback was struck by lightning and killed, but, strange to say, the horse escaped uninjured.

A LULLABY.

BY ALICE CARY.

A lovelorn woman sat under a tree,
And the sullen winds blew wild;
A little baby was on her knee,
And in a lullaby tune sang she,
Sleep, and wake not, child,
My poor little houseless child.

The air with snow was cold and gray—
Aside she hung her head,
And all the prayer that she could say,
Was, whoever blames me come this way
To-night, and strike me dead —
A mother, and unwed.

Thus, with the scorn of men o'ercast,
After days and weeks,
A lovelorn woman was found at last,
Two little hands all frozen fast
As icicles, on her cheeks,
Sin, thus its suffering wreaks.

And when the wind that chilled her so.
The sleet aside had driven,
A pitiful sight was there, for lo!
Two little eyes looked out of the snow
Fearless, up to heaven—
The high and holy heaven.

RICHARD HOFFMAN;

OR,

THE PEASANT AND THE NOBLEMAN.

A TALE OF LOVE AND RETRIBUTION.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE HYPOCRITE.

Before leaving the ball-room at the government house, Richard Tyrrell had accepted an invitation to breakfast with his friend Wharton.

The young men naturally referred to the ball in their conversation. The cornet was far too generous and manly to repeat the words Dawlish had used in speaking of our hero—words which he sufficiently resented, but confined his conversation to the ladies.

"She is indeed most lovely," he said, speaking of Lillian, "and, I have no doubt, as fascinating as lovely; for never did I see candor and purity more eloquently inspired upon the features of any human being, save one, perhaps."

"Some fair girl in England, doubtless?" said Fred.

"No—the lady I allude to is in Calcutta."

"Indeed!"

"You saw her last night at the ball?"

"I do not recollect."

"Ingrate!" exclaimed Wharton; "I allude to Mrs. Chutnee. You must have been deaf not to have heard the buzz of admiration which greeted her appearance in the room; blind, not to have seen the glances of admiration that followed her."

Our hero had indeed forgotten her; Lillian had absorbed all his admiration, and he blushed at what he considered his ingratitude.

"True," he said; "but Mrs. Chutnee is married,"

"To an old man."

His hearer looked painfully surprised at the tone in which the words were uttered, and looked in his face inquiringly.

"There, do not regard me so seriously," exclaimed the young officer; "I merely spoke to try you. Many last night remarked upon the absence of her husband, who is known to be excessively jealous, and made observations which I will not repeat."

"Respecting Mrs. Chutnee?"

His host nodded his head affirmatively.

"And me?"

"And you."

"Would I had heard them," said our hero, after a pause. "You cannot conceive how this information has annoyed me. I need not say the good-natured remarks were totally undeserved, for a more innocent being does not exist than the woman, or rather girl—for she is not yet eighteen—they would calumniate. Oh, world, world," he added, "what must I not expect to find in society, when such malice guards its very threshold."

"Perhaps it is because it is its threshold," observed Fred Wharton. "Scandal is like the dog which guards its entrance—once passed and you are safe."

His visitor shook his head doubtfully.

"I wish you would answer me one question," he said.

"Any," replied his host, "but the name of a single person who made the observations you complain of. To ask it were to doubt my friendship, to suspect me of moral cowardice in not resenting anything which you could possibly have been called upon to notice."

"I fear I must be silent, then."

The young men, not being old Indians, did not indulge very long over the luxuries of the table, but proceeded together to pay a morning visit to Lady Bell, who received them with her usual unaffected cheerfulness. Lillian, who was present, blushed slightly as her partner in the last night's dance inquired after her health.

It is astonishing how quickly time runs when passed in the society of those who interest us. Nearly an hour had elapsed before either of the visiters thought of departing, nor would they have done so then but for the arrival of Sir Charles, Major Plinlimmon, and a party of officers.

Dawlish was one of the number.

"Now that you have arrived to entertain my guests, I shall leave you," observed the mistress of the mansion. "Neither Lillian nor myself have yet recovered from our fatigue."

"Do not let our presence drive you away," observed the major, bowing with all the stately gallantry of the old school.

"*Your* presence! certainly not," exclaimed her ladyship, laughingly, and at the same time extending her hand to him. "How can you be so unjust to yourself as to suspect such a feeling."

With a nod to her husband, and a slight inclination to Dawlish, she quitted the room. The last-named gentleman bit his lip. He perfectly understood whose was the presence that drove her away; and his ill-feeling was still further increased by the cordial manner in which her ladyship took leave of the cornet and his companion.

Sir Charles proposed billiards to his guests, but as neither Wharton nor our hero understood the game, a party could not be made up. Chess and a cigar were next suggested,—fortunately for the friends, who felt anxious to leave, the major hated chess.

"I always sleep after it," he exclaimed.

One of the officers suggested a ride.

"Too hot," was the general reply.

"Well, gentlemen!" exclaimed their host, good humoredly, "I have done my best; fix on something yourselves. My imagination is worn out."

Richard pleaded as an excuse for leaving them, that he had an appointment with Sanford to inspect a house he had taken; and Fred Wharton offered to accompany him.

"Away with you," said Sir Charles. "I plainly perceive that we shall not have any assistance from you, but may pass our morning as an accident and as the caprice of these gentlemen may direct,—every one for himself in the *melee* of opinions. What say you, Plinlimmon, to a game of chess?" he added.

The challenge was accepted, for the major being exceedingly stout, seldom felt disposed either to ride or walk unless upon service—that he never shirked. The two friends withdrew, and the rest of the party scattered themselves over the house, some to the billiard-room, others to the garden or library, as books and their counter attractions, cigars or the delicious nargil prevailed.

The day being intensely warm, Richard and his companion, instead of mounting their horses, proceeded to view the new abode, Sandford had proposed to the former, in a palanquin. The managing clerk had arrived before them.

"Allow me," said he, "to welcome you to your own residence, where I trust you will pass many pleasant hours, and have sufficient friendship for me to allow me to share some of them with you."

Our hero smiled at the compliment—a smile pledged him to nothing.

"What think you of the arrangements?" added the speaker.

"I should be difficult to please, indeed," answered the young man, looking round him, "if I did not pronounce them perfect. What think you, Wharton?"

"Happy to change quarters with you," said the cornet laughingly, "as soon as you are tired of your bungalow, I think they call it."

Mr. Sanford informed him that the word bungalow applied rather to a country residence, a building of less solid construction.

The young officer thanked him.

"But who is your landlord?" he added, turning to his friend.

"Al Morad, the native banker, I believe.'

Fred shrugged his shoulders.

"Do you know him?"

RICHARD INTRODUCED TO HIS NEW ESTABLISHMENT.

"By sight only," answered his friend; "but I have heard no good of the fellow; he bears a bad name in Calcutta."

"Pardon me," observed the managing clerk, "but you must have been misinformed. There is not a more honorable man in the city. His signature is good on 'Change at any time for a lac of rupees."

"I did not speak of his commercial reputation, but his moral character. His cruelty, if the story related is true, to a poor Nautch girl, whom he deluded from one of the temples——"

"We never speak of moral character in India," interrupted Sandford, who evidently did not wish the tale to be related.

The young man regarded him with surprise, not unmixed with a feeling of contempt. There was something so revolting in his cynicism.

"That is," he added, perceiving the error into which he had fallen, "when conversing of the natives. They must not be judged by our standard, nor we my theirs."

"I should trust not!" emphatically exclaimed both the friends.

A tall man, about forty years of age, dressed in the costume of the East, approached the party, and salamed profoundly to the speaker.

"Who is this gentleman?" demanded the latter.

"He is your gentleman, or any man's gentleman who pays him twenty-five rupees a month—in other words, it is your khansumah, or butler.

On hearing his office named, the man bowed yet more reverently than before.

"Humph! rather a remarkable looking person," said our hero, regarding him attentively. "Mav I ask his name?"

"Hassam."

Richard repeated it.

"Hassam," said Mr. Sanford, speaking in Hindostani and in an undertone, "here is a pigeon for you to pluck—your new master."

"Ah, saib!"

"Use him gently."

"As gently as if his feathers were those of a bird of Paradise."

Richard Tyrrell broke into a loud laugh; the clerk and the Hindoo looked surprised, especially the latter, mirth being considered as exceedingly undignified in the East.

"Excuse me, Sanford," said the young man, "but I was thinking what a capital *sworn* interpreter you would make."

"Is it possible that you understand Hindostani?" asked the clerk.

"Perfectly; do you imagine that I was so foolish as to come without a knowledge of it?"

The hypocrite bit his lips, and resolved to be more careful for the future how he spoke his mind before the *boy*, as he had hitherto considered him.

"But what is this tale about Al Morad?" continued our hero; "perhaps Hassam can inform me. I think you said that Hassam lived with him?"

"True; but you will get nothing from him; he is fidelity itself to those whom he serves, or has served."

The Hindoo salamed at the compliment.

"I perceive, after all," said the new tenant of the place, "that I must trust to my friend Wharton's information; but my curiosity shall not make me forgetful of hospitality. Hassam!"

The Hindoo again salamed, and stood in an attitude of respectful attention before his young master.

"These gentlemen will dine with me; do your best, for your master's credit and honor of the establishment."

"The saib shall have no reason to complain of his servant."

And, with this promise the native butler retired to make preparations.

CHAPTER XLV.

A MYSTERY.

It is now necessary to explain to our readers how Lillian came to be at the ball given by the Governor-General of India, chaperoned by Lady Fourreau, and treated almost as a daughter by her husband.

When Rose had succeeded in conveying the rescued child on board the vessel which conveyed the gallant 01st to the East, she felt that it was impossible for her presence to remain long a secret from the colonel. An abrupt discovery might affect, not only the position of her husband, now a soldier and subjected to military discipline, but her own character for straightforward conduct and truth, qualities in which she had hitherto prided herself, and not without just reason. She resolved to take, therefore, the advice of Corporal Stock, and make a friend, if possible, of her new mistress.

Still it was not without misgiving and hesitation that she came to the conclusion; and, even then, did not put it into execution till the ship had passed the Land's End, and the possibility of sending the little intruder back no longer to be feared.

For the first two or three days, her ladyship had paid the usual penalty of those who venture upon the bosom of the ocean for the first time. Neither rank nor beauty are exempt from sea-sickness; fortunately, it did not last long. But, whilst it did, nothing could exceed the unwearied attention Rose paid to the sufferer. Night and day she remained by her pillow, anticipating every want. The most affectionate mother, watching over her child, could not have shown more devotion. No wonder that her mistress felt grateful, and esteemed herself fortunate in having obtained so excellent a nurse.

The sea-sickness had passed, and Lady Bell sufficiently recovered from its effects to dine at table with the ladies and officers of the regiment. Rose had waited purposely for the departure of Sir Charles, before making her appearance in the cabin to dress her ladyship's hair.

"You are ill, I fear," observed her mistress.

"It will soon pass," observed the poor creature, hesitatingly.

"I am sure you are. Your hand trembles, and your eyes appear red, as if with weeping. You have over-tasked yourself in your attentions to me. Never mind my hair," added the kind-hearted woman. "I can arrange it myself. You had better retire to your cabin, and I will send Dr. Burk to you."

"I am not ill, my lady; indeed, I am not," replied Rose; "at least, not in body.

"In mind, then. You have been weeping?"

"Alas! yes.'

"And the cause?"

Rose remained silent. The moment had arrived, and she could not find courage to speak. The words she had arranged in her own mind vanished from her memory.

"What will she not think of me?" she mentally ejaculated. "That I have unworthily deceived her.'

"Surely," exclaimed Lady Bell, fixing her eyes inquiringly upon the pale features and quivering lips of her attendant, "your husband has not spoken or acted unkindly to you, after all your patience and suffering? I see he has," she continued, "nothing less could have so distressed you. Oh! these men, these men. They treat our hearts as playthings. Like children, they first pine for our love, and when they have won it, neglect or trifle with us."

Of all the married ladies of our acquaintance, the speaker was about the last whom experience could justify in making such an observation, for her husband perfectly adored her. The only danger she had to dread was that of being spoilt by over-indulgence. How or why she formed such an opinion of our sex it is impossible to explain—probably it was one of those intuitive perceptions peculiar to woman.

"No, no," sobbed Rose, anxious to exculpate her husband from a suspicion which he did not deserve; "Mark would not pain me for the world; in fact, he never did so willingly."

"And you have no illness?"

"Not of the body, my lady."

Her mistress regarded her earnestly.

"Of the mind, then?" she repeated.

"Alas! yes."

"And you wish to confide it to me?"

"You are my only hope," exclaimed the agitated woman: "for unless your goodness stands between Sir Charles's anger and my fault, I shall lose his good opinion, I fear, for ever."

Fault! It was getting serious; and, grateful as Lady Forreau felt for the attention and devotion of her new attendant, she hesitated to compromise herself by any direct promise.

"It can't be anything very bad, Rose—morally bad, I mean—I think I may say that I feel assured of that—so confide in me at once. If I ought to befriend you, I will. I can say no more. Speak candidly—truthfully."

Thus encouraged, Rose informed her mistress that on quitting London she and Mark had brought with them the orphan child of a deceased friend, whom they had placed, as they thought, with those who would take care of her, but had been cruelly deceived.

"Was the child related to you?" demanded Lady Bell.

"No."

"Strange that you should have adopted it," was the reply.

Of course, Rose could not explain *why* they had taken Lillian: that would have been to have exposed the crime of her husband.

"He was the companion of Mark in childhood," she said; "and there were reasons, many reasons, why we could not abandon his orphan. Those whom I had left her with promised to protect her; but, instead of keeping their plighted word, they sold her, heartlessly sold her to a brutal mountebank and a fiend-like woman, who treated her cruelly. I knew not this—indeed I did not, when I entered your ladyship's service. It was not till after you had quitted the hotel in Southampton, that I found her in the streets. I was on my way with Stock to embark. When I discovered her, impulse as well as duty prompted me to rescue her from her fearful fate; I concealed her beneath my cloak—brought her on board—she is here."

"Here?" repeated her hearer, amazed.

"The wife of one of the soldiers has taken charge of her."

"Well," exclaimed Lady Bell, with a benevolent smile, "it is but one more in the vessel; I am glad it is no worse. I don't think Sir Charles will be very angry; if he should, I must intercede for you."

Rose, in the fullness of her gratitude, would have thrown herself at the speaker's feet and thanked her.

"Nonsense," interrupted her ladyship; "do nothing of the kind; it is not much good the best of us can do in this wicked world. There, dry your eyes, and finish dressing my hair. When my toilet is made, let me see your *protege*. How old is she?"

"About nine years old, my lady."

"And pretty?"

"Beautiful as a young angel, my lady.'

'And her name?"

"Lillian Gee."

In less than an hour after the above conversation, Lillian was secretly brought into the cabin of Lady Fourreau, who, despite her shabby, worn-out frock, felt struck, not only with the extreme beauty of the child, but with the extreme grace of her manner, and that air of distinction which even the poor weaver and his wife observed. There was no awkward embarrassment in her manner; on the contrary, she looked up smilingly into the face of Lady Bell, and, reading an expression of interest and kindness in her eyes, advanced and placed her little hand in hers.

"O Lilly!" exclaimed Rose, "you must not make so free. Pray excuse her, your ladyship: she does not know that you——"

"Never mind my ladyship," interrupted the kind-hearted woman. "What does she know of such distinctions? You have not over-praised her: she is lovely. I never saw a more aristocratic air. I have no wish to be too curious, so you need not answer my question unless you think fit to do so. Who was her father?"

"Barny Gee, my lady."

"And his rank?"

"He had been a soldier. I never saw her mother."

We all of us are aware that nature certainly does indulge in strange caprices at times. Lady Bell was not one of those women who imagine beauty to be the exclusive privilege of birth. The loveliness of the orphan, therefore, did not surprise her, but her manners and air of refinement did.

"You had better," said her ladyship, "return her for a day or two to the woman who has taken charge of her, till we can make her presentable; then return, and we will arrange everything. Good-by," she added, holding out her hand to the little object of her benevolence.

Lillian took it, and held up her face to be kissed. There was something so natural and confiding in the act, it touched the heart of her protectress, who, with true womanly kindness, touched her cheek with her lips.

"Be a good girl," she said, "and you shall see me again."

"I am always good with those I love," replied the child; "and I am sure that I shall love you. I like to hear you speak; it seems as if I had heard your voice before."

"Indeed!"

"It must have been in my dreams, for I have no recollection of your face—oh, yes," she added, "I know now: it is like my mamma's—my own dear mamma's voice, who used to caress me, and sing to me, long ago, before I crossed the sea."

Lady Bell looked at Rose, inquiringly.

"She was born whilst her father was on foreign service, my lady," observed the latter; "the poor fellow died directly after his return to his native village, and we all supposed her mother to have been foreign too."

"Most likely," thought her mistress: "that may account for her peculiar style of beauty and graceful manner."

Before quitting the cabin, Lady Bell kissed her again, and Rose contrived to take her back to the corporal's wife unseen by Sir Charles. The heart of the poor creature was much lighter. She felt as if half the sin she and her husband had committed in the abduction of Lillian from St. Faith's, had been removed by having found her such a protectress as the wife of Sir Charles Fourreau.

Lady Bell was one of those warm-hearted, impulsive creatures who never perform a kind action by halves. Many persons in her position would have considered that they acted with liberality enough in forgiving Rose for having introduced the orphan on board without permission; but she did more: she resolved to protect her; and, with the assistance of her waiting-woman, actually commenced that same day a wardrobe for Lillian, by cutting up several of her own dresses, and working at them herself.

When completed, Lillian was again sent for.

The lady very naturally anticipated the delight of the child on being clad for the first time, as she imagined, in a frock of silk. To her astonishment, Lilly did not appear in the least surprised. She kissed her ladyship, and thanked her, but expressed neither wonder nor admiration at the beauty of her dress.

"One would really imagine that she had been accustomed to silk dresses all her life," thought Lady Bell. "Are you not pleased," she added, speaking aloud, "with your new clothes?"

"I am pleased at being near you," was the reply.

"Can it be art?" mentally ejaculated the donor· "or has some one been tutoring her?"

Rose was too clear-sighted not to read the doubt passing in the mind of her mistress. She felt annoyed at Lilly's want of admiration.

"And do you not thank the good lady for her bounty?" she asked.

"I have thanked her."

"I did not hear you.

"Thanked her as I used to thank my own mamma, long ago, when she gave me a new dress, or brought me fresh flowers—there are no flowers where I have been lately—or sang to me: thanked her," she added, "with a kiss."

"And did your mamma often give you dresses?"

"Very often, when I was good, and had learnt my lessons."

"And what did you learn?"

"Lillian pointed to the pianoforte which stood open in the cabin.

There was something so extraordinary in the wife of a common soldier having her infant daughter taught the piano, that Lady Bell began to suspect Rose had imposed upon her, as to the real history and parentage of the child, and was about to declare her doubts to her, till she saw by her countenance that the waiting-woman was quite as much, if not more surprised than herself.

"And so you can play?" she said, addressing her *protege*.

The child smiled, and, walking to the instrument, run over one of Cruvelli's early airs, not without some difficulty, for two years at least must have elapsed since she had touched a piano. At first her benefactress suspected she played by ear, till, looking over her, she discovered the fingering to be correct, or nearly so.

"This is singular," she murmured.

Rose was equally puzzled to comprehend it.

"Ah, I have it!" exclaimed her ladyship, struck with a sudden idea. "Her father, no doubt, was a musician in one of the regimental bands."

She regarded her attendant as if to receive a confirmation of the supposition; but the right-minded woman, although it would have relieved her from an unpleasant suspicion, scorned to escape from her embarrassment, by even an indirect falsehood.

"I never heard that he was, my lady."

"And yet you knew him well?"

"From childhood."

"It is singular."

"It is singular," repeated Rose; "but he might have become a musician after he enlisted. His brother is reckoned the best bell-ringer in St. Faith's."

The supposition was plausible; still it did not convince or satisfy her mistress, or explain the silk dresses, which Lillian declared she had been accustomed to: and the lady looked not angry but hurt.

"Rose," she exclaimed, "I think I have merited that you should deal truthfully with me. I should be sorry, very sorry to change the opinion I have formed of you."

"Indeed, indeed, my lady, all that I have told you is the truth. I have known her father from childhood. We were born in the same village. He was of a family quite as humble as my own—perhaps, in the world's opinion, more so. He was a reckless idler, but not naturally a vicious man. But idleness is the source of crime. He became a poacher, and to avoid being punished by the lord of the manor, enlisted as a soldier. I was a mere girl at the time, but I recollect it as well as if it occurred but yesterday."

"He went abroad, you say?"

"He did, my lady. Last New Year's eve he unexpectedly returned, bringing Lillian with him. And died," added the speaker, hesitatingly, for she felt that she was treading on dangerous ground.

"Suddenly?"

"Very suddenly, my lady."

"A natural death?"

Rose turned pale as death, but the natural love of truth did not desert her.

"He was shot," she murmured, "in an affray with the gamekeepers of the lord of the manor."

"And your husband?"

"*Was with him.*" sobbed the terrified wife. "And now you know the tie which binds me to his orphan child. Do not betray him," she added, sinking on her knees, "Oh, for pity's sake, do not betray him."

There are accents whose verity cannot be mistaken; it is when they are wrung from the heart. Whatever else might remain inexplicable, Lady Bell felt that the speaker had spoken the truth. The rest, she felt, must be left to time—that great solver of all myteries—to unveil.

Although she had, previous to her marriage, mixed but little in the world, she had seen quite enough of it to know that very unequal marriages, as well as unions of a less sacred nature, will sometimes take place; and to some such she attributed the birth of her new *protege*.

"I am satisfied, Rose," she added, "quite satisfied that I suspected you unjustly. I shall not fall into the error easily again. If confidence is a plant of slow growth, it possesses great vitality, and that is a compensation. You had better leave Lillian with me. I expect Sir Charles in a few

minutes; he generally comes half an hour or so before the doctor looks in to give us our morning lesson in Hindostani."

The still anxious and trembling wife of Mark Rayner gathered up the old frock and clothes which the orphan had previously worn, and withdrew.

It was in vain that her protectress, as soon as they were alone, questioned the latter respecting her name and birth. All she knew was that her name was Lillian; that her father wore a red coat with gold somethings on his shoulders, but she had forgotten the name of them.

"An officer," thought Lady Bell. Then she recollected that in the cavalry the brass wings worn by the privates might easily be mistaken for gold epaulettes by a child of the speaker's tender years.

The child next informed her that she had lost her mamma, and traveled a long way over sea; but could not recollect either the name of the country she left, or that of the ship she sailed in.

Lady Bell felt more and more puzzled, and knew not what to think. The excellent character she had received with Rose, and her own good conduct since she had been in her service, precluded all idea of her having been concerned in any crime. But she did not feel quite so assured of her husband, and, with true woman's instinct, jumped to the conclusion that if anything wrong had been perpetrated, Mark was the only real offender, however the fidelity of his wife might induce her to remain a silent, and, as she believed, an unwilling witness.

Of the truth of Lillian's having been sold to mountebanks and exposed in the street there could not be the slightest doubt; for, no sooner did her ladyship allude to the circumstance, than the features of the child turned deadly pale, and she shuddered at the recollection of the horrors she had gone through. Bet and the whip, Fiddler Dick and his peculiar scowl, rose vividly in imagination before her.

"And were you very unhappy?" demanded her ladyship.

The orphan shuddered, and described how she had been beaten.

"And who sold you to them?"

Lillian did not know his name, "But Jack used to call him 'uncle Mike.'"

"Not Rose's husband, then?"

"Oh, no! he brought me from the other people who took care of me."

How far further the fair querist might have pushed her inquiries, or what would have been the ultimate result, it is impossible to state. Their further conversation was interrupted by the appearance of Sir Charles, who after saluting his wife, observed that she had found a companion.

"And is she not a lovely one?" replied Lady Bell.

The old soldier, who was naturally fond of children, held out his hand to her. Lillian, who had never taken her eyes from him from the instant he entered the state room, ran to him, laid her little head upon his shoulder, and sobbed bitterly.

We need scarcely say that both husband and wife were exceedingly surprised. But the cause of her grief was easily accounted for. Sir Charles was in uniform, and her papa, her own papa, used to wear just such a coat and cap.

"Is she an orphan?" inquired the baronet, after soothing and kissing away her tears.

"Yes."

"Going out to relations in India?"

"She is under the charge of a person who is going out," replied his lady, evasively, for she wished to interest her husband in her *protege* before relating her history to him, added to which, she was in momentary expectation of Dr. Burk, the surgeon of the regiment, who, having been in India many years, came regularly to give them lessons in Hindostani.

The learned gentleman speedily made his appearance. Lillian was directed to amuse herself by looking over one of Lady Bell's scrap-books, and the lesson commenced.

First, the instructor read a page from Kellart's work, and requested his pupils to pronounce the words after him. On hearing the sounds of the language of her childhood, the first in which she had lisped her little wants and fears, and which was far more familiar to her than English, tears started into the eyes of Lillian, and she sat gazing on the reader with breathless interest, but without interrupting him.

After the reading, next came the lesson from the vocabulary. Sir Charles repeated it almost without an error, unless that of pronunciation; not so Lady Bell, her mind and time had been too much occupied—she scarcely remembered a word.

"The day is a most lovely one," said the doctor, in English.

Her ladyship replied in Hindostani.

"Very well, indeed," exclaimed her tutor.

"I am delighted to see you well," he added.

"Dear me, what is the word?" exclaimed Lady Bell.

Lillian, who had crept near to her, whispered it. Her benefactress repeated it mechanically.

Suddenly she recollected from whom the prompting came. Surprise mastered every other feeling, and drawing the child towards her, she exclaimed—

"Why, Lillian! do you speak Hindostani?"

Dr. Burk and Sir Charles both questioned her. The former, after regarding her for some time with great earnestness, observed that he felt convinced of having seen her before, every feature of her face appeared so familiar to him.

"In England?" said her ladyship.

"No; it must have been in India," replied the gentleman; "and if I am not very much mistaken, I was the first who received her into this somewhat troublesome world. What is her name?"

"Lillian."

"Lillian what?"

"Gee."

"I certainly never attended a lady of that name," remarked the doctor. "Umph! how very extraordinary that I should not recollect the name of her parents; but something will doubtless occur to bring it to my memory."

When the speaker had taken his leave, Lady Bell related to her husband the story of Rose, concealing from him only that part of it which related to the poaching of Mark Rayner, and the death of the supposed father. With all his many good qualities, she knew that her husband had an Englishman's aristocratic prejudice against all unlicensed sportsmen, added to which, she felt that it had been revealed to her in confidence, and she was far too honorable to betray it.

"You are not angry with me?" she asked, when she had concluded her singular and somewhat romantic narrative.

"Angry with you!" repeated the gentleman; "why should I feel anger? You have but followed the natural impulse of your benevolent heart. In fact, in the situations in which you were placed, I do not see how either you or Rose could have acted otherwise—the child could not be sent back again."

"And you will allow her to remain with me?"

"If it will afford you pleasure, certainly."

"Oh, thank you, Charley!" exclaimed his wife, in a tone of delight; "you cannot think how exceedingly happy you have made me."

Here the speaker folded Lillian in her arms; then bade her go and thank Sir Charles for his goodness.

"Bell," said her husband, "I have but one observation to make—don't look so serious, it is not a very long one. In undertaking the charge of this child it is necessary that you decide at once and irrevocably the position she is to hold in the eyes of the world. It must be either that of a dependent or a ward."

"Of a dependent, never."

"In that case," observed the baronet, "you will do well to attend to her education as soon as the vessel arrives in Calcutta. She is gifted with the promise of a beauty which may prove fatal to her happiness, or secure it, according as she is trained."

"Fear not," replied the lady; "I will act kindly."

"That I am sure you will; but you must do something more—act wisely. In the first place, the persons who brought her on board, and who disclaim any tie of blood—were it otherwise, I would be the last to exact such a sacrifice—must forego all claim or authority over her."

"They will be but too happy, I feel assured, to do so."

"In the next, her story must remain a secret between ourselves and Dr. Burk."

"You answer for the doctor," replied her ladyship, "and I will undertake for Rose, her husband, and myself."

"Upon these conditions, then," said Sir Charles, "Lillian is henceforth your ward."

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT.]

LETTERS OF THE DEAD.

A STRANGE STORY.

BY AUGUSTA MOORE.

There are few who have reached the age of twenty-five that have not stores of *such* treasures. And we all have days of looking over these eloquent momentoes of our beloved dead. How mournful they are; with what a touching, though voiceless cry, do they move our hearts, even when we know that the life of the dear writer was gladness, and his death peace. The letters penned by the hand that never more will clasp ours, call out many tears and sighs of sorrow.

We read the cheerful and hopeful sentences, and are sad to think that the buoy of such healthful companionship is gone from us to return no more. We read the expressions of deep and faithful affection for ourselves, and our souls yearn almost beyond endurance for a renewal of that old-time intercourse. It matters not how much cause there may have been for gratitude in the life and death of our vanished ones, we long, oh, *how* we long! to see them once more; and we weep and groan because we know that, in the flesh, we cannot.

If the letters we hold in our hand be those of a dead *mother* how they exhaust the very fountain of our tears. We feel so miserable, so utterly desolate, so unloved and forsaken, that we wish that we, too, were lying, out of the cold air of the world, in our dear mother's grave. We recall what life seemed to us while she—our light—was with us; we remember how happy was the morning that woke us but to hasten to look upon our mother's face; how happy was the noon that sent us to the "home where our heart was"—our blessed mother; how happy the evening was, when through its shades we saw our mother's smile, and heard our mother's song. All her unutterable tenderness to usward; the comfort she was to us; the all-sufficiency to us of her love, are remembered; and then we recall what has been *since she left us;* what now is, and what is *to come*. The contrast is too much for us—our heart dies within us; and our head becomes as water, and our eyes as fountains of tears. We wonder then, and it is but natural, whether no whisper of the devastation which her death caused in our life has ever reached her in her home beyond the stars. It seems as if she must have wholly forgotten us, or that some word of pity or love *would* have been sent to us long years ago. Our *mother's* spirit! could it live and be unconscious of the woe and agony which, in those nights which we so well remember, stamped marks upon us which the years cannot wear away? And if she *knew* of those times of helpless and most acute distress *why* did she not come and comfort us? Ah! we know that she *could not* come, or she would have stood beside her child in such wretchedness—if at no other time. So, with sob, and sigh, and quivering breath, we fold her letters back into their place, and open another package. Ah! the seal of death is on these also. Are they from some gifted and happy friend cut down like grass and laid to his last slumber with the freshness of youth upon him? Are they from the venerated saint of many years whose hand has been laid upon our head in blessing, whose tears have baptised us as we told him that duty called us to some distant place of labor?

All these have their peculiar mournfulness; but when we open some little discolored file, and read—first, the artless words of a little, affectionate child that our heart once tried (how vainly!) to shield from the roughness of life: next, the words that betray a consciousness of his desolate, orphaned lot; his expressions of love to us as his only sympathising friend; his prayer for the blessing of God to come down on the "best and only friend" of the motherless boy; then his history of the destitution and trouble in which he was; but his hopeful exhortations to us not to be discouraged or grieved for him, for that all things were for the best; and "boys" could "always get along some way or another," we are stirred more painfully than we have yet been.

We pass on from letter to letter of this package—it contains the history of a life—a gloomy, tragic history, swelled out with strange crowding of disappointment, disaster, and death. We knew the writer when he was a little child; we knew him when he was a babe in his mother's arms. When that mother died she committed her boy unto our love—and faithfully did we *love* him as our own soul—but what did that love avail—it might have been a consolation—the letters prove that such it was; but it never saved his devoted head from a single blow from the hand of fate. These letters tell of all his weary wanderings by sea and land; of the abuse—the hunger, the cold, the wretchedness, of those dreary days. Through all, the poor lad *hoped*—he was always hoping for some good thing yet before him. His young heart was brave, and his young hand was strong, and he thought that he could conquer life. At length came a flash of pleasure. It followed a painful and most bitter parting scene; for the boy went forth to the land of many graves—to California, to seek his fortune there. For a time the letters are full of his interest and excitement in his new life; by-and-by they tell of loss of gold, and food, and cattle, and health; then comes one with news of having found a friend, and of having gained land which was to become very valuable; of a meditated immediate return to the mines to secure a little more gold; and of a homeward journey in the coming autumn. This letter, so full of the cheerful, loving, gracious spirit of the boy that loved us better than he did any thing in the wide world, for whose welfare and safety we would have freely laid down our life, was the *last* that ever came from him. It was known that he started in a two-sail boat from San Jose, to go to San Fransisco, on the evening before a violent storm. His boat, laden with grain and gold, and carrying several passengers, was not at San Fransisco by the time she was due there; and those who expected her, becoming alarmed, went out to look for her. Now begins that part of this strange story which causes us to thrill with a sort of supernatural horror at the very touch of certain papers which are bound with these dear letters—the simple-hearted expressions of feeling of him who is—we know not where.

To any who may suppose that they see inconsistency or impossibility in what is to follow we have only to remark that it is absolutely and strictly *true*. An explanation of it we do not attempt to give; but to the *facts* of the whole case many beside ourselves can bear witness.

On the night of the middle of November, 1850, the sister of my wandering boy dreamed that she stood, beneath a sky of midnight blackness, upon the shore of a stormy sea. The heavy rolling waves were hardly visible as they came towards the beach, but the white foam on them showed that they were there. Suddenly, stretched on the top of a great black billow, she saw her brother. His face, white as death, made clearly visible by some unnatural light, was turned towards her, and his arms were extended for aid. His brown eyes were full of the agony of fear, as he cried out, calling his sister's name.

With instant speed, and feeling within her the strength of despair, she rushed to seize her brother's hands; but the wave made haste to sweep him from her reach; and she, shrieking in anguish and fear, awoke from her dream.

Oh! how glad she was that she had been only *dreaming*. After thanking God that she was awake, and had seen that her trouble was not real, she again sank into slumber. But a second time the stormy sea, the imploring face, the franctic cry, awoke her; and in the cold damp of the horror she lay shivering a long while before she dared to sleep a third time.

But she slept once more, and a *third* time was she awakened by that bitter cry.

Greatly terrified and distressed the sister now arose, and awaited with deep anxiety the time when she might communicate with her friends, in relation to her distressing dream. It was never known exactly on what day her brother left San Jose; but she was told that it was on or about the 15th of November.

She also learned that the boat had been found right side up upon a sand bar in the bay of San Francisco, some two or three miles from the main land. She had two uncles in San Francisco, and one of these went to look for the missing boat and its master. This much she heard from the distant country where our dear boy had so long been toiling for the means to make us a home together.

While in the hight of our anxiety as to her brother's fate, this sister was advised to go and hear what a certain "clairvoyant" or "medium" would say to her about her lost one. She at length, without the least idea of gaining any further information than could be first "pumped" out of her, consented; and in due time was seated before the dread woman.

Taking the maiden's hand, the woman commenced, not in these exact words probably, but in substance, as follows:

"He is far away; *he is tall and fair; he is dear and near to you; he has auburn hair, soft and curly; he is brave and persevering;* can do what he wills; he has had much trouble; his heart has been discouraged, but he is elastic; he has had various fortunes where he is now. *When he went in the boat he did well but once; he has been sick; was better when his letter was written,* (she had his last letter in her hand, but it was folded closely, and she had not looked even at the outside of it;) *found friends who went to the mines with him; the second time he went in the boat a storm arose; the boat grounded;* great confusion; he is hurt on the head and side; is senseless; the men leave him; go off in a smaller boat; *this boat is aground, but not on the shore;* the water where he is is not like a river; looks like a small sea; he is left alone; men, awful looking men—robbers, come off the shore in the morning, and take him away when they go; they leave him at a great white house on a plain; looks like a convent; a priest tends him; puts silver in his head; the men come at night and take him away to a village they have in the mountains; they are kind to him, but watch him closely; they want a ransom for him, or they think he can't take care of himself, for his head is not yet well. *A man went for the boat;* two other men helped him to get it off the bar; *he was the friend of the young man I look at; the man who sold him the boat*—(this we supposed that we knew was a mistake; we thought another uncle sold it to him.) *He got the boat safe back to San Francisco.* The young man will come home, but it may not be very soon; he will come home——"

Another woman—a stranger to this one and to all of us—(as was also the first medium,) spoke to the following effect:

"I see him; he has *had a hard time; has been sick; had cattle; went in a boat; stormy;* struck, but not on the main land; *started for San Jose; has a name marked on his arm; 'Jane' pricked in;* (this, although unknown to the persons then present, was true, the boy marked his arm thus with India ink, and it had never worn out;) men leave the boat; young man off to mountains; his head is hurt and his leg; he will go lame for life; they watch him; they want a ransom; they treat him well; he escapes; he is in the mines with a man he calls John; he hid a long time among some rocks when he first got away; they could not find him; would have *killed* him if they had found him; he thinks of home, but supposes that all belonging to him think him dead; so he will not come or write till he gets some gold; he thinks that he will let his friends see before they hear from him; he is not dead; he will come home; *he was the youngest of the five who composed the party with which he went out; but one of that party died; a large, dark man, who died soon after he got there at Sacramento;* set down what I say and see if it is not true; *the uncle who let the young man have the boat went and found it on the sand bar;* two rough men were near; they helped him about the boat; they were of the robbers; *he took the boat back to San Francisco.*"

By this time we had become very much astonished. Thinking of nothing better to do, we went to a friend's, and related these singular circumstances. The gentlemen there were evidently interested. They assured us that ours was not the first or only case of the kind; and they requested of us the loan of the soft auburn curl that had years before been cut from the temple of our missing boy. This was sealed up; and a reporter was summoned to whom it was intrusted, with these words and no more, "Go to Miss S. with this, and these sealed letters, and take notes of what she says."

They also sent the following note to Miss S. (the last woman to whom we had been,) "Will Miss S. please examine these, without opening either."

In a short time the man returned with a puzzled expression of face—his notes were few and confused—he said the woman could'nt get along with telling about the health of that person, (both the reporter and the 'sorceress' had imagined that she was expected to tell the state of health of the wife of the gentleman who wrote the note,) she said her mind was carried far away by the package in her hand; she was in a wild country where she had been some time before to look for a lost young man; then she declared that she saw him again; and repeated what she had told to us; adding that she could not divest herself of the idea that *that* was what was wanted of her. Here was further food for amazement. We were all stupid from astonishment. No one could tell what to do. All of the foregoing communications that are in italics we knew to be perfectly correct; the remainder we knew not how to believe, or how to *dis*believe.

We could gain no definite information as to the direction in which to seek for our wanderer. On this point the wisdom of the wise woman entirely failed. We wrote at once to California. We had advertised the boy; we scattered thousands of notices and circulars all through California; we wrote urgent appeals to every postmaster; we did all that was in our power to do, but we heard no tidings of joy. Letters came from his uncle; they fully confirmed the story of the witch woman as far as the boat matters went. It *was* of the man who rescued the little craft that its unfortunate master purchased it, and the uncle wrote that Satan surely must have helped the woman, for *those two rough men were actually hanging round*, apparently watching to see who came for the boat. He said *he thought them to be robbers or pirates*, and was afraid of them, although he would not allow them to perceive that; but, making a virtue of necessity, he called to them to help him get the boat off the bar. He told them that the vessel belonged to his nephew, and that he feared the boy was drowned.

"Oh, no," replied the men. "We guess he isn't drowned."

A year passed—two years. Three, and no tidings from the wanderer, when in a frolic, one evening, two young girls proposed a trial of table tipping. The thing worked well. Several relatives of our long absent child were present. There were very decided tips in their behalf; and when it was asked if any spirit wished to speak with them, the reply was "Yes."

Many names were called, when the names of our boy and his mother were mentioned, the reply was "Yes" again. Questions were asked and correctly answered; and then, as the young ladies at the table were completely in the dark as to the history of him who seemed to be communicating through them, a gentleman commenced to tell the story of the clairvoyants. As he went on, that bewitched table kept up a regular confirmatory tip, tip, tip, until he came to the escape after hiding amid the rocks; there it stopped short.

"There is something there that that sagacious table don't endorse," remarked some one.

The gentleman instantly went back a little in his narrative. Said he—

"And we found, from the statements of several travelers, who, hearing the report of these things, were kind enough to come and tell us of the fact, that there *was a large, white mission house upon a plain* not far from the point where the boat was run aground. They had passed the night there. When H. escaped from his captors, he hid among the rocks while they hunted for him, and when they had given him up, he escaped to a place of safety."

Here the table stopped again.

"Did you see that?" was the general exclamation.

"Didn't he escape the robbers?" asked some one, in a terror-struck voice.

"No, no!" was the instant reply.

"Did they find him in the rocks?"

"Yes."

"Did they kill him?"

"Yes."

Foolish and weak as it was, there was groaning and tears at that answer of the senseless table.

What was there in the room that no mortal could see?

We made the table count out the boy's age, and the number of years which he had been gone; we made it count the ages of persons present, and answer numberless questions of which the girls, who, to their own utter astonishment, were showing themselves to be such excellent mediums, knew nothing. We tested them in all possible ways, and the end of the matter was, that we were all completely bewildered. Believe in this sort of spirit manifestation we could not and would not; but what, oh! *what* could this mystic influence be? and had it told us *truly* of a violent and bloody death, fallen on our beloved wanderer?

No one could tell; all was doubt and perplexity. There was nothing to be done but to wait and see what the future would show.

The record of all these things was made, and folded up with these letters before us now. This is the reason why a feeling of doubt and dread ever mingles with the sorrow with which we look upon the letters of our ill-fated boy. How *can* we go *all our lifetime* ignorant of his true fate? How *can* we bear up under the idea that it is ever possible that our dear and affectionate child, after his years of sadness and hardship, our fair-haired wanderer, so long beat upon by adverse winds, so tempest-tossed and not comforted, was at last laid low, in his youthful strength, by the hands of murderers? Oh! the thought is distraction. What! that dear form and that beloved face cut down by cruel hands, and left exposed upon the desert plains! That long, bright, curling hair left blowing in the wind, to be the only covering of him whose cheek a mother's love once guarded from all rude touches of the sun and air? Beautiful curling hair! here is *one* tress—where are its fellows? Oh! for the power to shelter those we love! Oh! for a *little* of the power of God to see, and guide, and guard our living treasures, as He can guard those that He will. We, poor, helpless worms! must send our dearest ones forth, unknowing that a day will bear them safely. All we can do is to lift them on our hearts to God, and leave them to His will. Alas! that will may be that they go straight to disaster, misery, or sudden, even bloody, death. Therefore our souls *must* tremble, even as we commend them unto God, and all that we have to stay us is His promise that *whatever* here may chance, "*all things shall* work together for the good of those that love God," and that "what we know not *now* we *shall* know hereafter." Here let us plant our feet, nor be frighted from our foothold, though all the pale horses of death stamp and champ around us, though all the hosts of darkness and despair hang out their banners over our heads, and raise their mounts against us. It is the *only* stronghold in trouble; woe unto us if we be driven out of it.

But these letters. No further light has dawned upon the fate of their writer, nor do we longer hope for such dawning in this world. However much truth the mediums may tell in any given case, we have learned that there is *no dependence to be placed on anything merely because they assert it.* Their art is all a mystery—a most void and unsatisfactory mystery. We speak not now of that part of it which is sheer imposition. We cannot stoop to the thought that the spirits of our dead do actually knock about on doors, and chairs, and tables; yet how and by what power the things that we know to be true were told respecting our lost boy, by persons utterly unknown and unknowing to either him or us, we humbly confess that we can by no means tell. We know that the tale of his murder may or may not be true; but we know that he is gone, and that these letters, particularly the little note written to cheer us, and sent the morning that he started from this city, from the store where, with his company, he passed the night, are able to keep him more faithfully and warmly pictured on our hearts than any art of portrait painter could have done.

RELATIONSHIPS AND AFFINITIES

BY MARY FORREST.

Consanguinity is no law of the heart. We are apt to mistake the fine tapestry of family pride, whose voluminous folds shut the world from the household, for that mantle of charity which Love wraps with such a sweet carefulness about its own. We look upon a habit of consideration born of precept, and nurtured in the nearness of home-intercourse, as the expression of an inner-recognition, the mystical magnetism of kindred blood. Would to God we were never deceived!

Very tender and beautiful is the family relation of Divine appointment; but it is based upon an eternal fitness, and molded from sympathies the most profound and unlimited. The warm, magnetic currents which course through its arteries have their rise in one generous fountain—the life-blood of commingled hearts. Sympathy is the soul of true relationship. Without it there is no bond but the external one which the laws of social life necessarily impose. But God-appointed families are the scattered pearls on the sea-shore;—families of man's appointment the countless sands. Man is short-sighted and self-confident.

"Most ignorant of what he's most assured
His glassy essence"—

he chooses what seemeth good to his fancy, leaving out of question the aspirations and needs of his being,—or, setting aside fancy and every other law of affiliation, strikes alliances of wealth, fame, or position, which no love and no God sanctify. Out of these inharmonies grow those false relations in families which are such a fruitful source of sorrow and wrong. Down through succeeding generations flow the united but unmingled tides of blood. Imperfect sympathies, simulations of antagonisms spring in endless variety about the fireside. The golden words father, mother, brother, sister, roll in soft accents from tongue to tongue, but they have lost their golden ring. There is no thrill of the heart in them. The law of blood would seem to be unconstitutional. The law of affinity asserts itself. The soul of the father may call out to something akin in the soul of the child—the answering, "my father," be low, loving and reverent, and no bond of sympathy extend through the home-circle. The mother-soul may infold the soul of one child, and that sweetest, holiest of all utterances—"mother," go up to her and Heaven, a seal of recognition, while every other family-tie is a mere sign upon the family escutcheon; a something that should be, and is not. A sister may be drawn to one brother, a brother to one sister; not because of the sisterly or fraternal relation,—the same tie may exist between them and many others, to whom they are indifferent or antagonistic—but because his or her soul of beauty and nobleness is irresistibly attractive.

The household, in spite of its blazoned arms, the family-wrought hangings of pride that enclose it, and all the appliances and tender affectations of relationship, is little else than a miniature world, with its attractions and repulsions; its nobility and baseness; its heroism and weakness; its magnanimity and treachery; its integrity and criminality; its Cains and Abels; its serpents and doves;—a divine institution like the paradise of Eden, and, like that paradise, profaned and degenerate. The claims of blood have ceased to be imperative and infallible. We are thrown of necessity upon our instincts. We can no more affiliate with malignity, vice, and crime in the home-circle than in the social circle. Because the blood tingling in our veins with indignant shame and protest conjoins us with persistent baseness and perfidy, must we offer the right hand of fellowship to the traitor or criminal?

Related antagonism is a paradox of the flesh. It is no divine law, but a consequence of the violation of the divine law. All through the earth-life we may say father, mother, brother, sister, daughter, son, and yet meet in the new life as strangers, because these relations are unrecognized of the spirit.

The sphere of such a household is most dead, erring and oppressive. Its peace is either the turbid calm of stagnation, or the treacherous stillness of the volcano, within whose bosom are seething Plutonian tempests. Its hospitality is an exaggerated tolerance; its smile is the shadow of pain; its hope a mild kind of despair; cold ashes lie upon its altar-place;—the associated worship of divided hearts is felt to be a mockery.

Home is felt to be a sad misnomer for a scene like this, yet in such homes and relationships the world abounds. But there is an element of good in everything, and some sweet Picciola of sympathy is sure to spring up and bloom amid even the cold and darkness of mis-alliance. Here and there, too, like oases upon the waste, we find the true family. A seed of God's planting—a root, a germ of love—its growth is goodly and symmetrical. Its very differences are pleasant shades that glide one into another, like the tints of sunset. A beautiful, harmonious effect is produced. Perfect love casteth out fear. An atmosphere of peace surrounds us. Smiles, tears and hand-grasps are electrical. The united offerings of united hearts go up, like a cloud of incense, from a glowing altar. We are gladdened and refreshed; it is an earnest of the Home of many mansions.

So a minimum of the leaven of affinity leavens and redeems the whole lump of family disorder; and the family relation—that key-stone in the arch of social life—is preserved unbroken. By these, and many other tokens, are we convinced that related mind is the higher law of our being;—that genuine consanguinity is the offspring of genuine affinity, and any other parentage destroys the magnetic quality in blood.

DO NOT CULTIVATE CURIOSITY.—Every man has in his own life follies enough; in his own mind troubles enough; in the performance of his duties, deficiencies enough; without being curious about the affairs of others.

A LEGEND OF THE DESERT.

BY SALLIE M. BRYAN.

The mournful moon, thro' misty vail,
O'er wide Zahara's waste looked down
On one young sleeper, worn and pale,
With careless curls of golden-brown.

Alone—lost from his wandering band,
He lay in sweet and smiling rest;
While to his heart one blue-veined hand
A lovely lady's picture pressed.

Away beside the storied Rhine
His childhood's dreamy beauty roved;
The sunny valleys of the vine
Embosomed all he wished and loved.

But in his early youth's bright hours
His fair twin-sister drooped and died;
And soon they pushed away the flowers,
And laid his *mother* by her side.

And she, the beautiful and true,
Whose young love echoed back his own—
Ere long the grave had claimed her too—
And Karl was left on earth alone.

In olden castles, rapt in thought,
He heard wild legends from the wind,
And lingered there until he caught
A ruined romance in his mind.

Tears rained and quenched his bosom's fire,
His lip nor smiled nor sighed nor curled;
And, yielding to his one desire,
He grew a wanderer of the world.

* * * * *

Now on the desert-sand he dreamed:
His lost ones came in angel guise—
How soft their spirit-kisses seemed
On the closed lids of his blue eyes.

At last thro' midnight's boundless blue,
Past starry isles in distance dim,
His mother and sweet sister flew—
But his young love remained with him.

'At morn, by burning blast," she said,
"Red sands will round thy path be driven—
My darling Karl! bow thy bright head
And sleep—thou'lt wake with us, in Heaven."

From his sweet lip the sun's first rays
Awoke a sound more glad than all
That they were wont in olden days
From Memnon's viewless lyre to call.

And when he saw the fatal wrath—
That swept the burning sands more near,
Low in their ruin-wasting path,
He bowed and—died without a fear.

A SLIGHT MISTAKE.

A GAME AT FORTUNE-HUNTING.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR

"I declare," said Lydia Collins, who had taken up the morning paper, "Sidney West has come home." She seemed to be deeply moved, and various were the shades that chased each other over her fair face.

"And has Frank come with him?" asked Nellie, with an eager look and tone.

"I don't know anything about Frank," returned Lydia, with a toss of the head that had some contempt in it. "Only the names of those who have brought home money with them are printed. You can look for yourself."

Nellie took the paper, and saw that SIDNEY T. WEST had brought home eighty thousand dollars. Below this she saw a list of passengers, and in it she found the name of FRANK WEST; but there was no mention made of his having brought home any money.

"Frank has come," she cried, in glad tones.

"Well, suppose he has? Of course you do not mean to renew the old intimacy."

"I should like to see him, at all events," replied Nellie, and then she went on reading the paper.

Lydia and Nellie Collins were sisters; the former being twenty-eight years of age, and the latter six years younger. Their father, who had been at one time quite a flourishing merchant, had been dead a number of years, and the sisters lived with their mother, in a fine house, and in a fashionable part of the city. Mrs. Collins was naturally a good woman; but Fashion had turned her head somewhat, and she thought more of having her daughters move in select circles than she did of surrounding them with healthful influences. But there was a vast difference between the dispositions of these two daughters. Nellie had been her father's pet, and had drawn from him a fund of sound sense and reason which her sister had failed to obtain, and which did not leave her when her father was taken away. There was a deep current of humanity—of natural, grateful love—underlying her whole nature, and even her scheming, fashionable sister respected her for it, though she probably had no real conception of why this respect was called forth.

It was generally supposed that Mrs. Collins was wealthy. She owned the house in which she lived, and it was known that her husband had left her considerable money.

Sidney and Frank West were cousins, and had once been clerks in the employ of Mr. Collins. Three years previous to the opening of our story, they went to California to "seek their fortunes," and had now returned, as we have seen.

One evening, as Mrs. Collins and her two daughters were alone, Sidney and Frank were announced. They were cheerfully admitted, and warmly welcomed. Sidney was a tall, dashing-looking fellow, five-and-thirty years of age, dressed in the hight of fashion, and flashing with costly jewelry. His cousin was some years younger, and dressed very plainly. Frank was by far the most intelligent and handsome, though he lacked "*style*." In fact, he was rather commonplace in his manners and conversation, depending more upon the substance of what he did and said, than upon the show he could make. But Sidney blazed and flashed away like a pyrotechnic battery, and he was not long in enrapturing Lydia and her mother. Frank and Nellie finally drew together upon one of the *tete-a-tetes*, and there enjoyed a conversation by themselves.

"I must secure that man!" said Lydia, after the visitors had gone.

"What," returned her sister, with some surprise, "do you mean Sidney West?"

"Indeed I do."

"You cannot do such a thing, Lydia. Are you not engaged to Charles Adams?"

"No—indeed I am not."

"But you have given him every encouragement."

"I may have done so while he was the best match that offered," returned Lydia, with a toss of the head. "But I have been very guarded in my conversation with him. I have made him no promises."

"But," pursued Nellie, with a troubled look, "you have given him every encouragement, and I know that he loves you, and thinks you mean to be his wife."

"And do you think I would give my hand to a poor clerk, when such a prize as this is within my grasp?" said Lydia, with much warmth.

"You should not call Charles Adams a *poor clerk*," said Nellie, reproachfully. "He has a salary of two thousand dollars a year, and will soon go into business on his own account. You know he has confided to you a statement of all his pecuniary plans and prospects."

"Yes—so he has," retorted the elder sister; "and if he ever succeeds in business, it must be some years first, during which time his wife must be helping him save. No, no—none of that for me, while a husband is within my grasp who is already independently rich."

"I think," spoke Mrs. Collins, at this point, "that Sidney West offers a very desirable match. I think he loves Lydia, and would make her a very good husband."

"I know he used to love me," said Lydia.

"But you returned his love by treating him very coldly," suggested Nellie.

"That was when he was only a poor clerk," returned the proud beauty; "but now that he has returned with the golden fleece of Phryxus, he is quite a different person."

"He will make a very eligible match," pronounced the mother, with much decision. She spoke as though she had made up her mind, and wished to hear no more argument upon the point.

"And now let me ask you a question," said Lydia, turning to her sister. "You probably remember that Mr. Frank West used to have a particular regard for you, and I should judge, from the clumsy manner in which he deported himself this evening, that he not only had the same regard now, but that he had some hope of succeeding in his suit."

"Well," returned Nellie, very quietly.

"Would you give him your hand?"

"Perhaps so—if he should ask me for it."

"You would, my child?" interposed Mrs. Collins.

"I should," was Nellie's answer. "That is," she added, "if I found him to be what I think he is."

"But, my daughter," resumed the mother, with some show of concern, "you should reflect upon this. I had hoped that you would give your hand to Edwin Lofton. You know he is wealthy, and is very anxious to gain you for a wife, while this Frank West is probably poor, and not calculated to rise in the world."

"How do you know he is poor, mother?"

"I learned to-day that only one of the cousins brought home money. Sydney has been shrewdly speculating, and coining gold, while the other has been drudging, as he will probably continue to do."

"Well, mother," returned Nellie, after thinking a moment, "I shall be governed in this by my own sense of what is right and proper. I know that my father always loved Frank, and had much confidence in him, and I will not deny that I love him, even now. With regard to Mr. Lofton, I should never have a husband if he were my only choice. He may be wealthy, but his character is not good. If Frank is poor, I know he is industrious and persevering, and the few thousand dollars which my father left for me will enable him to start well in some moderate business."

Mrs. Collins changed color, and seemed to be startled by what her daughter had said; but she soon managed to compose herself, though she did not resume the conversation.

"Egad, Frank, I come on gloriously with my charmer!" crid Sidney West, as the two sat in their room at the hotel. "She has promised to be mine. Only think—she wouldn't even look at me when I went away."

"What can have produced the change, think you?" asked Frank.

"My manners, sir," retorted Sydney, spreading himself with a mock show. "I have captivated her. She is willing to bestow her fortune upon me in consideration of the fine, fashionable husband I shall give her. But I mean to do the handsome thing, Frank; I mean to be steady, and go into business as soon as I am married."

"I hope you will, Sid.," returned the younger cousin. "You have talent and ability, and there is no reason why you should not prosper."

"Thank you. But say—how do you come on with Nellie?"

"I have not spoken with her yet—that is, not directly," returned Frank with some hesitation.

"Pooh! You're safe enough. She loves you—she's loved you for years. You'll get a HEART, Frank."

"If I get Nellie Collins, I shall get a true and loving wife, I am sure."

"Of course you will."

As Sidney thus spoke he looked at his watch, and then arose and went out. In a little while Frank followed his example, and wended his way towards Mrs. Collins's. He found Nellie at home, and went in to spend the evening. They conversed upon various matters until quite late, and then Frank approached the subject that lay nearest his heart. He told Nellie that he could not bear the suspense longer. He said he loved her as he had never loved another—he had loved her a long time—and if she would be his wife he would love her always.

Nellie trembled, and it was some moments ere she answered. But finally she looked up, and said, with a warm, generous frankness—

"I must answer you plainly, for my own happiness is as much at stake as yours. Had you asked me this question a week ago I should have had no hesitation in giving my answer. But I am not situated now as I then supposed I was."

"Nellie," cried the lover, as his companion hesitated, "what can you mean? You surely love me. O—you cannot have given to an——"

"Stop, Frank," interposed the maiden, with a sudden start, "you misunderstand me. I must tell you the truth—I must confide to you a secret which I at first resolved that I would never divulge. I only knew it three days ago. You knew that my father left some property?"

"I did."

"And that some few thousand dollars were left for each of his children?"

"I had supposed so."

"Well—in an unfortunate moment my mother, who had the use of it all, was led into a speculation by which everything was lost. It all appeared fair and sure to her, and she ran the risk with the firm belief that she should nearly double the property. She lost it all; but she was not to blame. I am sorry, for her sake, for she suffers much."

"And what of this?" asked Frank, after waiting awhile to see if she would say any more.

"Why—it leaves me penniless," returned Nellie.

"So much the better," cried the youth, seizing the fair girl by the hand, "for now I can claim you on the ground of love alone. I have already made arrangements for going into business, and I am sure of income enough to support us comfortably. Now will you be my wife?"

When Frank West went away that night he was as happy as mortal can be. His plans for life were all laid, and he had placed all the scenes of his future in a warm sunlight.

"Then you have really consented to become his wife?" said Lydia, after Nellie had told her the result of the interview of the preceding evening.

"Yes, sister—I have."

"And I think you have done a very foolish thing, Nellie. Since you have discovered that your money was all lost we had hoped you would look out for a more becoming match."

"Since *I* have discovered it," returned Nellie, with marked emphasis. "What do you mean? Did *you* know it before?"

"Yes—I knew it two years ago."

"And never told me?"

"Of course not."

"But, Lydia—why should you have kept such an important matter from me?"

"Because," answered the elder sister, "we feared you would be too honest to keep it to yourself. It might have made a vast difference in our prospects, whether we had ten thousand dollars each, or had nothing. We hoped to see you marry with a wealthy husband, and then you wouldn't have missed the money you had lost."

"And do you think this was right?" asked Nellie, with a look of concern. "It is deception, and can only lead to evil."

"There you go!" exclaimed Lydia. "Just as I supposed. You will never succeed in playing the game of life. You will show your hand at every start."

"I have no wish to make a game of my life," said Nellie, with deep feeling; "and those who do so are full as apt to lose as they are to win. I had much rather take life, with all its duties and responsibilities, as a solemn fact, and try to live it justly and honorably."

"That's poetical, I must confess—though rather of the psalm-tune order," replied Lydia. "But give me the game, especially when I hold the chances in my own hand. I have played, and won."

"But you told Sidney that you had no money?"

"Indeed I didn't do any such thing. He has money enough of his own. Did you tell Frank?"

"Of course I did."

"Mercy on me—what a paragon you have become!"

Nellie turned away, sad and sorrowful, for she feared that evil would come of all this.

Sidney West and Lydia Collins were married, and for a while the husband resided at the house of his mother-in-law. One afternoon, about a month after the first marriage, Nellie gave her hand to Frank. The ceremony had been performed, and the guests had departed, when the happy bridegroom asked his bride to accompany him to his home.

"But," said Nellie, in surprise, "I did not know that you had taken a house."

"Certainly I have, my sweet wife. I would not have a bird like this without a cage fit to keep her in. Yes—come and see it."

After the newly-married pair had gone, Mrs. Collins drew Lydia aside, and whispered to her—

"My dear, I think you had better speak to Sidney about his business; and also hint to him that we must soon find a new home, or else have the mortgage paid off on this house. You can do it now, as well as at any time."

"Won't you do it, mother?"

"No—it is your place to do that."

"But you will be present?"

"Yes. I will do that."

The mother and daughter returned to the parlor, and sat down.

"Sidney, dear," commenced Lydia.

"My love—my life—what?" cried the husband, raising himself to an upright position.

"I want to ask you a question."

"Ask me a hundred."

"It is a very important one, Sidney."

"Ask it, love—life—my charmer."

"It is about your business, my dear husband."

"Ah—the very thing I have long been anxious to speak about, my angel. I think I ought to go into business soon. I have an excellent opportunity—one of the most liberal offers. For twelve thousand dollars I can buy out one quarter of a flourishing concern, and for four-and-twenty thousand I can have half of it. It is a splendid offer, I assure you."

"And do you mean to buy it?" asked Mrs. Collins.

"I wish to do so."

"Then of course you will," suggested Lydia.

"Ah—that depends upon circumstances," replied Sidney. "I am willing to put all my energies and business tact against capital, and go it."

"I do not understand, you love."

"Then I must speak plainly," resumed Sidney. "If you will furnish the money, I will do the rest."

"*Me* furnish the money!" uttered Lydia.

"Yes, angel."

"But—you—have—money?"

"Not enough to pay a month's board, sweet charmer. But I have tact, and——. Bless me! what's the matter? Have you got a fit?"

"No money!" groaned Lydia, sinking back upon the sofa, and covering her face with her hands.

"Do not trifle with her feelings, Sidney," interposed the mother. "You are cruel."

"But I have only spoken the truth."

"Did you not bring home eighty thousand dollars from California?"

"No."

"Then you have deceived us most cruelly, sir."

"But my wife has money."

"Not a dollar."

"Are you in earnest?"

"I am. What little money we had has been swept away by an unfortunate speculation."

"Then, by Heavens!" cried Sidney, "I should say that *I* had been slightly deceived. You know that the impression prevailed that you had money, and you knew that I was aware of the fact that Mr. Collins left over ten thousand dollars to each of his daughters. Why didn't you tell me of this before?"

"Why didn't you tell us that you had no money?" returned Mrs. Collins.

"Simply because I never professed to have any."

"Then what was meant by that account in the paper?"

"Oho!" exclaimed the husband. "You got hold of that, did you? And that accounts for the peculiar warmth of my reception! That, it seems, worked the change that gave me the love I sought. I understand it now. But, upon my word, there was no deception on my part there. When I got ready to start for home, my cousin received a summons to attend to some business which he feared would detain him till the sailing of the next steamer, and as his gold was already on board, and he did not wish to remove it, he placed it under my care, and it was so consigned in the list. But, at the last moment, he finished his business, and was enabled to come home with me."

"And Frank is the wealthy one!" gasped Lydia.

"Yes. He delved and dug, while I speculated; and he made a fortune, while I—didn't."

"Oh! how I have been deceived!" cried the disappointed wife.

"Grossly deceived," added the mother.

Sidney started from his seat, and having walked up and down the floor a few times, he stopped and faced the two women. He was very calm, and the bitter expression which had dwelt upon his face gave place to a mocking smile.

"I guess we had better not deal too much in accusations," he said, "for I don't think either of us can claim much charity on that score. We have both of us—perhaps all three of us—played a pretty kind of a game, but it seems we all held losing hands. You were not averse to a little bit of deception for the sake of securing a rich husband; and perhaps I am not free from the same weakness. However—we've made a slight mistake, but the thing's done, and it can't be helped; so we must make the best of it. We had better keep it to ourselves than have it get out. Folks would enjoy it hugely if they knew what a mistake you had made in your game at Fortune hunting. All there is about it, we must turn to now, and work. I am caught, and I will make the best of it; but just let me assure you that I will not submit to any further fault-finding or recrimination."

When Nellie found herself within a comfortable, well-furnished house, and knew that it was her own, and that her husband was wealthy, she sank upon his bosom and wept in her joyful gratitude. She tried to chide him for having deceived her, but very soon he convinced her that he had not deceived her at all.

"This blissful hour," he cried, "has been my goal for years. Through all the weary seasons of toil I have been sustained by the hope that in the end this fair hand should be mine; and not a joy has my wealth promised me that did not look to you as a sharer in it."

Nellie believed him, and she was happy—happy as she deserved to be—happy as only such pure hearts can be.

Frank went into business, and he hired his cousin Sidney for a book-keeper, and paid him a good salary. Lydia had come to her senses, and when her mother went to live with Nellie she resolved that she would make the best of the estate which had fallen to her lot, though she will never cease to regret, during the moments when the old thoughts of fashionable life come over her, the slight mistake she made in playing her Game of Life.

FAST COLORS.

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

Our fair friends, in the selection of their garments, do not regard the beautiful styles alone; they look a little beyond these surface attractions, and demand *fast colors*. They must have something that will stand the trial of sun and air, it may be water, also. None but the vain and foolish are dazzled by the showy exterior—with the rest, *fast color* gives the final argument.

I thought of this one evening—it was many years ago—at a pleasant party, as I saw the young men crowding around a girl of striking beauty, and leaving others of less imposing attractions to talk with the married men, or to sit in partial neglect together.

Miss Condie was certainly very beautiful to look upon. I found my eyes wandering to her face every few moments, and lingering there as if spell-bound. It was like a picture I had seen somewhere.

"Will it bear the trial of time? Are the colors fast?" The thought came as I looked upon her almost perfect face, and its quaintness amused me.

"This may not be, after all, the best style of beauty," I said to myself. "The colors are exceedingly rich, the pattern exquisite, the fabric unusually fine, but who can warrant it not to fade?"

I met Miss Condie frequently afterwards, and, somehow or other, the query as to fast colors always came into my mind. Her complexion was delicate, yet brilliant at the same time; her eyes were of a very dark blue, and swimming in light; her lips full and ruddy. The play of thought and feeling was rapid, and her countenance revealed every changing impulse.

"The colors will not stand," I said to myself. It was a year after our first meeting. "There is no mordant in the composition. She is vain and selfish. The heart is not right."

I did not err in this conclusion. Already there were shades of expression about her lips, and in the eyes, that repelled rather than attracted.

"Time and wear are bleaching her rapidly," said I, on meeting her five years later, and after she had been three years a bride. Her eyes were large and full, as when we last met; there was light in them, but not the same light. Her lips were round and ruddy, but discontent had already marred their original beauty. She had a kind husband; but, alas! her heart was not right, and craved more than he could give. She loved the world's admiration. It was the pleasant food upon which she had long existed, like the butterfly upon the honey of flowers, and so found not contentment in the quiet joys of home—found no pleasure in its wholesome duties.

"Alas! how faded! I see but the wavering outlines of her old beauty!" Another cycle of five years had been complete, and I had looked upon her face again. Ill-nature, querulousness, disappointment and brooding melancholy had stolen away her charms, so that scarcely a vestige remained. She sat almost alone, in the company where I had chanced to meet her, repelling, now, instead of drawing all towards her, as of old, with winning attractions. The colors of her maiden beauty were not fast colors. Sun, air, water had bleached them, and now only the clouded figure remained. Even her husband kept at a distance from her.

The spectacle was sad to see. The moral is plain. Young men in search of life-companions, take a lesson from our fair friends. As they look not alone at style and beauty of fabric in selecting their garments, but demand *fast colors* as well, so let your eyes go deeper than the surface, and choose the colors that will not run. They are cheerfulness, humanity, unselfish regard for others, patience, kindness, love. These are colors that grow brighter with time. No sun can bleach them, and no water wash them out.

FUNERAL CEREMONIES OF THE HINDOOS.

Immediately after the person is dead, and in many cases before this takes place, preparations are made to burn the body. We have seen the wood lying by the side of the sick person while he was still living. The person being dead, his son, perhaps, takes up water in a new pot, and while the priest reads the prayer, puts linseed and *toolsee*-leaves into the water, and after annointing the body with clarified butter, pours it on his father's head, as a kind of ablution. This is accompanied by a prayer to the different holy rivers, that they may come into this pan of water, and that the deceased may have the merit of having been bathed in them all. Then the son, throwing away the old clothes, puts new ones upon the corpse, one of which is folded and placed on the body. One of the relations now digs a hole in the earth, over which the wood is laid: about 300 lbs. of wood is sufficient to consume a single body. The rich throw sandal-wood, on account of its fragrance, among the other wood of the funereal pile, and a poor man endeavors to procure a little. Clarified butter and Indian pitch are also poured upon the wood, upon which a new piece of cloth is spread, and in this cloth the body is wrapped and placed on the pile with the face downwards, if a man, and the reverse if a woman, the head being laid towards the north, and the legs placed under the thighs. A trifle of gold or copper is brought in contact with the mouth, nostrils, eyes, and ears; and after this, boiled rice, plantains, clarified butter, sugar, honey, sour curds, seeds of the *toolsee*, etc., are offered in a ball to the deceased, repeating his name and family. The heir-at-law then lights some straw, walks round the pile three times with face averted, and touches the mouth of the deceased with the fire, after which those present set the pile on fire all round.

At this time, the heir presents a prayer to the regent of fire, that whether the deceased committed sin, or practiced religion, sinned knowingly or unknowingly, he would, by his energy, consume with the body all its sins, and bestow on the deceased final happiness. The fire burns about two hours; the smell is extremely offensive when no pitch is used. Three or four relations generally perform this last office for the dead. When the body is partly burnt, it may so happen that some bony parts have unavoidably fallen on the side. These, together with the skull, are carefully gathered, beaten to pieces, and consumed.

The Hindoo who related these facts added, without the least apparent concern, that when he assisted to burn the body of his father, the burning made a noise like the frying of fat, and that when he beat his father's skull to pieces, to be reduced to ashes with the other bones, it contained a very large quantity of melted fat. At the close, the heir, taking seven sticks, a span long, in his hand, walks round the pile seven times, throwing one of the sticks on the fire at each circumambulation; and then beats the fire with the hatchet seven times. Water is now brought, the whole place washed, and a gutter cut in the ground, that the water from the funereal pile and the Ganges may unite. They then fill a pot with water, cover it with an earthen plate, and put upon the plate eight kourees. They afterwards, with the handle of the spade, break this pot, spill the water, and then, crying Huree-bul! or, Huzza! they depart.

The persons who have burnt the dead become unclean, and cannot return to their houses till they have bathed. After shaving, bathing, and putting on new garments, one of which is twisted like a rope, or *poita*, the heir-at-law goes home. Yet a son cannot eat or drink on the day of his father's funeral. Before they who have burnt the dead go into the house, they touch some fire, prepared and placed at the door for the purpose; they put their hand on the fire, take the bitter leaf of the lime tree, chew it, and then spit it out again. Near relations put on new clothes, take off their necklaces, refrain from combing their hair, annointing their bodies, carrying an umbrella, riding in a palankeen, or wearing shoes or a turban. These and other actions are intended as signs of an ancient state, as well as of a time of sorrow.

MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS

BY AUGUSTA HERBERT.

An often-quoted text, and one from which a man might preach from now all the way to his coffin without making some people understand it. "What's that you was saying? tell me." "What's that you are hiding? show me." "What are you doing? let me see," say Polly Pry and Billy Meddlesome; and day after day they reiterate their questions, growing more and more intent upon having them answered, the more they are assured that they had no business to ask them, in the first place. Set down a package within the reach of these persons, and see if you are not saved the trouble of opening it. Leave an unsealed letter in their way, and they are very soon master of its contents. Undertake to hold a confidential conversation with a particular friend, and get Billy and Polly out of the room if you can. Verily, they'll stick closer than a brother—or they will make their exit to pay silent obeisance at the keyhole.

If there is anything under the sun that you desire to keep to yourself, that is the very thing which they are in "travail" to discover. Don't you know them, reader? Probably you do. If not, you are a favored mortal—for, truly, they *abound*.

And they, as a family, are eminently successful. There seems to be a quality in the very air favorable to the desires, and to the chief aim of such people. How it chances that they discover so many hidden things, none can rightly tell; but not only do "the walls whisper" to them, it is quite likely that each Billy and each Polly is aided and abetted by a familiar spirit, who can listen, and peep, and creep, where those, in whose service it may be, cannot conveniently go.

Contemptible is that disposition which, just for the sake of knowing them, desires to discover any other person's private matters.

We have an unmitigated dislike to "pumping" and to "pumpers." Would gladly have them all hanged—by the thumbs—till they reform. A mind is never truly great and noble until it has learned to "mind its own business." What your friend or associate does not want you to know, you should *prefer* not to know. If he is sensitive in regard to the matter, not only do not question *him*, but don't allow *anybody else* to tell you what it would pain him to have you know.

Never touch other people's letters, nor attempt to read them, unless with the owner's leave, though they be piled as high as your nose about you, and every one of them open. If a person hands you a letter turned down at a particular place, *don't* let the very first thing you do be to turn over the sheet, to see what is folded out of your sight. Don't be mean in *small* things, whatever you may be in large. If you *must* make of yourself a nuisance, do it in a grand and overt way.

REASON AND INSTINCT.

Reason and instinct have obvious differences; yet the more intelligent animals, in some of their actions, approach so near to reason, that it is really surprising how small the distinction appears.

The great and most striking superiority of reason seems to consist in this point: the capacity of knowing and acknowledging our Creator, and understanding his commands; this peculiarity of reason has the solemn effect of rendering its owner responsible for his conduct in obeying those behests.

Reason also is capable of perpetual improvement. Instinct is not. However close, therefore, be their situation at any given time, if one stands still while the other advances, the distance between them will at length become infinite.

Which is the greatest calamity of man, the loss of reason, or the misuse of reason?

That which will incur the greatest punishment.

INTO THE NIGHT.

BY WILLIE E. PABOR

Into the night the lady goes,
Into the night, the solemn night;
Her white veil on the night-wind flows,
Her face is mantled with affright,
And like a woman wild she goes
Into the night, into the night.

Her steps are down secluded ways
To yonder churchyard, and among
The tombs she wanders, and she prays
A prayer she says she learned when young
And now she walks about and says
That prayer the solemn mounds among.

O what is in the lady's life,
And what is in the lady's heart;
How many passions are at strife,
How many try to tear apart
The pages of that lady's life?
The record of that lady's heart?

If she should seal her eyes so brown,
If she should tie her lily hands,
She still would pass beyond the town
To where an humble tombstone stands
And lay her beating bosom down,
And kiss the dark and stained sands.

For in the years now dead and gone
She bade a lover true depart;
She with a look of bitter scorn
Pressed 'neath her feet a faithful heart,
And over that crushed heart was borne
At altar base to act her part.

Now through the night the lady speeds,
And those who listen hear her cry,
As at her lover's tomb she pleads
With his dead heart to let her die;
But her wild prayer he never heeds,
Nor to her pleading gives reply.

THE LION HUNT.

Before entering into a description of the mode of chase adopted with regard to this formidable animal, we may give the reader some insight into the make and character of the lion, and more particularly the lion of Africa.

The lion, which is usually considered the strongest of the cat kind, is generally distinguished by its uniform yellow color, the tuft at the end of the tail, and the mane covering the head and shoulders of the male. Cuvier says that it is the most courageous of the animals of prey; and he adds, that, spread, at one time, over all the parts of the ancient world, it would appear at the present day that it is nearly confined to Africa, and some neighboring parts of Asia.

The "King of the Forest," as applied to the lion, appears to be a misnomer: for it is an animal that is never met except on the plains, and generally in the deserts. The parts where it seeks shelter seem not in any case to be the forest, but the low cover that creeps along the sides of rivers, the patches that mark the springs or the rank grass of the valley.

Of the strength of the African lion many extraordinary stories are on record. It is a feat of no difficulty to this powerful brute to carry off a man; of this horrible fact, there are many dismal accounts. A lion of the Cape of Good Hope or of Senegal will seize a heifer in his mouth, and though the legs drag along the ground, carry her off with the same ease that a cat does a rat, leaping over a broad dyke with her without the least apparent effort. It will convey a horse a mile from the spot where he has killed it. On one occasion a lion that had carried off a two-year old heifer was followed on the track, or *spoor*, for five hours by horsemen, when it appeared that throughout the whole distance the carcass of the heifer was only once or twice discovered to have touched the ground. After such demonstrations of strength the asportations of man sink into insignificance; and there is an idea prevailing in Africa that the human race is the favorite prey of the lion.

Travelers, however, assert that the general prey of the African lion are the larger herbivorous quadrupeds, and that there are very few of them that it cannot master. It is, consequently, a severe scourge to the farmers, who are ever on the look-out for his approach in a search after their cows and horses, oxen and sheep. If they have the good fortune to see him coming, he will, in nine cases out of ten, slink back and walk off quietly; and if no cover is near and he is not pursued, he gradually mends his pace to a trot, till he has reached a good distance, and then he bounds away.

The demeanor of lions on such occasions is of a careless disposition, as if they did not want a fray, but if pressed, are ready to fight it out. If they are pursued closely, they turn and couch, generally with their faces to the adversary; then the nerves of the sportsman are tried. If he is collected and master of his craft, the well-directed rifle ends the scene at once; but if in the flutter of the moment, the vital parts are missed, or the ball passes by, leaving the lion unhurt, the infuriated beast frequently charges on his enemies, dealing destruction around him. This, however, is not always the case, and a steady unshrinking deportment has, in more instances than one, saved the life of the hunter.

Indeed a timely recovery of self-possession has saved a man when, seized with panic, he has fled and been pursued by a lion.

One day, a Dutchman, Jacob Kok of Zee-hoe-river, at the Cape of Good Hope, walking over his lands with a loaded gun, unexpectedly met a lion. Being an excellent shot, and a cool sportsman who seldom failed of using his rifle with effect, he thought himself pretty certain from the position in which he was, of killing it, and therefore fired his piece. Unfortunately he did not recollect that the charge had been in it for some time, and consequently was damp; so that his piece hung fire, and the ball falling short, entered the ground close to the lion. In consequence of this the worthy Dutchman was seized with a panic, and took directly to his heels; but being soon out of breath and closely pursued by the lion, Jacob Kok jumped upon a little heap of stones, and there made a stand, presenting the butt end of his gun to his adversary, fully resolved to defend his life as well as he could to the utmost. This deportment had such an effect on his pursuer, that the lion also made a stand, and lay down at the distance of a few paces from the heap of stones, seemingly quite unconcerned. Jacob, in the meantime, did not stir from the spot; besides, he had in his flight unfortunately dropped his powder-horn. At length, after waiting a good half hour the lion rose up, and at first went very slowly, and step by step only, as if he had a mind to steal off; but as soon as he got to a greater distance, to the great relief of Jacob Kok, he began to bound away at a great rate.

A traveler gives the following interesting account in his "Wanderings in Africa," of his confronting one of these animals:—

"The day was exceedingly pleasant, and there was not a cloud to be seen. For a mile or two we traveled along the banks of the river, which, in this part, abounded in tall mat-rushes. The dogs seemed much to enjoy prowling about, and examining every bushy place. At last they met with some object among the bushes which caused them to set up a most vehement and determined barking. We explored the spot with caution, as we suspected, from the peculiar tone of their bark, that it was what we found it out to be—lions.

"Having encouraged the dogs to drive them out,—a task which they performed with great unwillingness—we had a full view of an enormous black-tailed lion and lioness.

"The latter was seen only for a minute, as she made her escape up the river, under the concealment of the rushes: but the lion came steadily forward, and stood still to look at us.

"At this moment we felt our situation not free from danger, as the animal seemed preparing to spring upon us, and we were standing on the bank at the distance of only a few yards from him, most of us being on foot and unarmed, without any visible possibility of escaping. I had given up my horse to the hunters, and was on foot myself; but there was no time for fear, and it was useless to attempt avoiding him.

"I stood well upon my guard, holding my pistols in my hand, with my finger upon the trigger: and those who had muskets kept themselves prepared in the same manner.

"But at this instant the dogs boldly flew in between us and the lion, and surrounding him, kept him at bay by their violent and resolute barking. The courage of these faithful animals was most admirable: they advanced up to the side of the huge beast, and stood making the greatest clamor in his face without the least appearance of fear. The lion, conscious of his strength, remained unmoved at their noisy attempts, and kept his head turned towards us. At one moment, the dogs, perceiving his eye thus engaged, had advanced close to his feet, and seemed as if they would actually seize hold of him; but they paid dearly for their imprudence, for, without discomposing the majestic and lofty attitude in which he stood fixed, he merely moved his paw, and at the next instant I beheld two lying dead.

"In doing this, he made so little exertion, that it was scarcely perceptible by what means they had been killed.

"Of the time which we gained by the interference of the dogs, not a moment was lost. We fired upon him: one of the balls went through his side, just between the short ribs, and the blood began to flow; but the animal still remained standing in the same position. We had now no doubt that he would spring upon us—every gun was instantly reloaded: but happily we were mistaken, and were not sorry to see him move quietly away, though I had hoped in a few minutes to have been enabled to take hold of his paw without danger."

There is hardly a book of African travels which does not teem with the dangers and hair-breadth escapes of the lion hunters; and hardly one that does not include a fatal issue to some engaged in this hazardous sport. We give the following details of a lion hunt from the note-book of a traveler:

"We at length arrived on the confines of an immeasurable desert—an immense plain, extending like an ocean. Not a tree—nor a shrub—nor a blade of grass, was to be seen; but all appeared like an extreme fine sand, mixed with gold dust and little sparkling pearls.

"As we proceeded on our way over this inhospitable plain, exposed to the perpendicular rays of a burning sun, we came to an oasis of groves and woods, and through the carpet of verdure rolled a rivulet. Here a lion, which had been crouching among the reeds which bordered this stream, sprang upon one of our company. Luckily for the man he missed him; for if he had succeeded in flying upon him he would have torn him to pieces; but knowing that he had no hope of safety but by flight, fled accordingly. But being very unlike the tiger, he went off slowly, and in a very sullen manner, giving us time to mount our horses; and one of the party firing at him, struck him with a ball. He, thereupon, began exhibiting great boldness, standing as if preparing to resist us.

"A Frenchman, infinitely more courageous than he was strong, or expert in the chase, made an attack upon him with a lance, which he broke, and would infallibly have been torn and killed, had it not been for a slave, who, seeing his danger, came promptly to his succour, and pierced, with a blow of his dagger, the lion already wounded by his master."

Of all the games in Africa and the East, the hunting of the lion is infinitely the most dangerous kind of sporting. About a hundred years ago it was the most royal, because there was then none but the king and princes that could exercise it, except by a very particular leave.

When the king was in the field, and the hunting guards had discovered the place of the lion's retirement, they tied fast an ass in the neighborhood, which the lion soon came to devour; and after having partaken largely of the animal, returned to his ordinary lodging place, where he lay down and slept until next morning, when he found another ass in the same place. When the king's hunting guards had thus baited and amused him for several days, they tied fast another ass, which they had made swallow a quantity of opium, in order that his flesh might lull the lion asleep, and then all the people in the villages round about spread large and strong nets. All things being thus prepared, the king mounted on an elephant trapped in iron, attended by his great hunting master—abundance of men on horseback—and a numerous hunting guard on foot, approached the nets, and shot at the lion with a great musket. Finding himself wounded, the lion rushed, of course, towards the elephant, but met with the big nets which stopped him. The king then shot at him till he killed him.

Such was the mode of hunting the lion in India a hundred years ago; but now there is no particular privilege attached to the shooting of it, and the English residents are its commonest assailants.

As an instance of this, we give the following interesting description of a lion hunt near Kaira in Bombay.

Some sporting gentlemen of that place being informed that three lions had been discovered in a small jungle two miles from Beereije, immediate preparations were made to assemble a large party, and to proceed to chase them from thence.

Intermediately, accounts were received that the size and ferocity of the animals had struck a panic into the adjacent villages, that six of the natives who had unwarily approached their haunts had been torn and mangled, and left to expire in the greatest agonies, and that it was no longer safe for the inhabitants to proceed to the ordinary occupations of husbandry, or to turn out their cattle to pasture, as several of them had been hunted down and killed.

These accounts only stimulated the British Nimrods; and a party of sixteen gentlemen having assembled, proceeded to the scene of action accompanied by a body of armed peons from the Adaulet and revenue departments. The guides took them to the precise spot where the three lions were reposing in state. The party advanced with due caution to within a few paces of the jungle without disturbing the residents. A momentary pause, big with expectation, succeeded.

At that instant, three dogs which had joined the hunt, unconscious of danger, approached the very threshold of the *presence*, and were received with such a sepulchral growl, as for the moment made "the bravest hold his breath." One of the dogs was killed, the other two fled and were seen no more.

Presently a lioness was indistinctly observed at the mouth of the den; a few arrows were discharged with a view to irritate her, and induce her to make an attack on her assailants; but this did not succeed, as she broke cover in an opposite direction, with two cubs about two-thirds grown. The party pursued the fugitives on foot as far as the nature of the ground, which was newly plowed, would admit; when suddenly one of the men who had been stationed in the trees called out to the gentlemen to be on their guard. This arrested their progress. They turned on one side to some hights, when they descried an enormous lion approaching them through an open field at an easy canter, and lashing his tail in a style of indescribable grandeur.

The foremost of the party presented their pieces and fired, just as the animal had cleared, at one bound, a chasm which was between them of twelve feet broad. He was apparently wounded on the shoulder, but sprang, nevertheless, on a gentleman whose arm he lacerated dreadfully; and feeling, at the same time, a peon's lance, he relinquished his first hold, seized the poor fellow by the throat, and strangled him before they dared fire, lest they should kill his victim.

He was now at bay, but sheltered in such a manner as rendered it difficult to bring him down, when suddenly the man on the look-out gave another shout of alarm, and almost immediately the party perceived a lioness which had broken cover, approaching their rear.

The same instant their ears were assailed by the shrieks and yells of men, women and children, occasioned by the animal crossing the road in the midst of the coolies that were carrying tiffin to the village. A woman and a child were almost instantly sacrificed to her fury. The woman was literally torn to pieces.

This proved not the last calamity of this memorable hunt.

The gentlemen, with the peons, left their former enemy to attack the lioness who threatened the village. The party, from the rapid manner in which the beast was followed, were not able to keep very compact; and most unfortunately, four of the collector's peons advanced upon the place where the lioness had lain down. She immediately sprang upon the nearest, and brought him to the ground, crushing his skull and tearing his face, so that no feature was discernable, and the skin literally hung in the wind. A companion who advanced to his assistance was seized by the thigh; in the agony of pain he caught the beast by the throat, when she quitted his thigh and fastened on his arm and breast.

At this moment the gentlemen advanced within fifteen paces, and as she was still standing over her unfortunate victim, lodged twenty balls in her body. She retreated to the hedge, where some more shots terminated her existence. She had abundance of milk, which, from the novelty, most of the party tasted.

Both of the peons died within a few hours

MORAL BEAUTY.—What is the beauty of nature but a beauty clothed with moral associations? What is the highest beauty of literature, poetry, fiction and the fine arts, but a moral beauty genius has bodied forth for the admiration of the world? and what are those qualities of the human character which are treasured up in the memory and heart of nations—the objects of universal reverence and exultation, the themes of celebration, of eloquence, and the festal of song, the enshrined idols of admiration and love? Are they not patriotism, heroism, philanthropy, disinterestedness, magnanimity, martyrdom?

LAUGHABLE.—A countryman having bought a sheep's head, had been to a friend for a direction to dress it. As he was returning, repeating the method, and holding his purchase under his arm, a dog snatched it, and ran away. "Now, my dear joy," said the countryman, "what a fool you make of yourself! What use will it be to you, as you don't know how it is to be dressed?"

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

W. W.—A good hand-writing is of course a desirable thing for man or woman. But this accomplishment can not be acquired in "twelve easy lessons," nor in fifty lessons, nor in a hundred. It takes *years* of practice for any one to acquire an easy, legible, graceful, rapid, and stylish hand-writing. The fact is, nothing that is useful can be acquired without time and labor; and all this "easy lesson" business is sheer nonsense. The *principles* of penmanship can of course be exhibited and explained in a few hours, but their practical application is a matter of much and wearisome labor.

SOPHIA.—Such a situation as you mention cannot be obtained, especially by a lady, except in rare instances. So far as we are concerned, we want no "assistant," nor do we "know of any such chair, in this or any other city, that is waiting for an occupant." On the contrary, for every such "chair" there are scores of persons in waiting.

ESSE.—The only way you can find out whether or not your sweetheart "has good qualities of a lasting description," as you say, is to marry her. You will of course run some risk, but no more than she will run in marrying you.

ELLEN.—You should state the case to your father, or brother, or some male friend, and let him take the impertinent intruder in hand. Such an ill-mannered person can only be influenced by fear.

JOSEPH.—The first ingredient in conversation is truth, the next is good sense, the third, good humor, and the last, wit.

GONDAM.—You are wide of the mark. The trial of Aaron Burr for treason took place at Richmond, in Virginia, instead of at Annapolis, in Maryland, and during Jefferson's *second* term of office as President, instead of his first. During Jefferson's first term, Burr was himself Vice-President. The world-famous duel with Hamilton was fought while Burr was Vice-President. His beautiful and celebrated daughter, Theodosia, the wife of Governor Alston, of South Carolina, instead of "dying with grief and shame at her father's disgrace, consequent upon his trial for treason," as you state, felt proud of her father's course, and stood by him throughout his trial, and ever after, and met an unknown fate as she was coming to New York to welcome him home from his long exile in Europe. She embarked on board a ship bound from Charleston to this port, and neither ship nor any human being on board of her was ever heard of more. *That* was the most terrible blow which that ambitious, iron-souled man ever received, and it inflicted a wound upon his adamantine heart which never ceased to bleed until he was laid beneath the sod.

J. W. S.—In private communications, or in signing receipts or legal documents, a married woman should sign her *own* name, and not use the Christian name of her husband. Suppose your own Christian name were Mary, and that you were the wife of Richard Roe, whose name so often figures in the courts. In the instances above-mentioned you should sign your name Mary Roe; or, if you were writing to a person unknown to you whom you wished to have know that you were a married woman, you might write your signature Mrs. Mary Roe. But if your name were to be published in the newspapers as attached to a card or announcement for furthering some benevolent object, or other public purpose, then it would perhaps be better to set it down as Mrs. Richard Roe, so everybody would know precisely who was meant and the wished-for influence be exerted.

THREATENED.—You have no cause for alarm. The threatener's positive and fierce declarations are mere vaporings. He cannot compel you to marry him; and as you have done nothing which you would be unwilling to have made public, he cannot harm you. He may attempt to slander you; but as his former relations to you, and the reasons of their discontinuance, are generally known, such an attempt would recoil upon his own head. Your best course would be to refuse to see him, or to have any communication with him whatever, and then let him rave and threaten to his heart's content.

VICTIM.—We cannot tell to what extent you would be liable, in the event of your second marriage, unless we are informed what the decree of the court was that granted the divorce. If it was decreed that you should not marry again, while your first wife is living, it will not do for you to disobey the decree. Your best course would be to submit your case in full to some good lawyer, informing him of every point—of the abandoned character of the woman whom you so unfortunately married, and your consent to her getting a divorce from you, and everything else bearing upon the matter, and then take his advice.

WM. HENRY HARRISON, JR.—It is possible that a voyage at sea, before the mast, would improve your health and strengthen your constitution, and it might have a contrary effect. You could see but very few foreign countries during such a voyage, and would not enjoy first-class privileges for sight-seeing. If your object is to gratify your curiosity in regard to foreign countries, you had better work where you are for five years, save all the money you can, master the French and German languages, and then make a tour of Europe, and also visit such other parts of the world as your means will at that time allow

MARY.—The party to whom you refer is not Sylvanus Cobb, Jr. Mr. Cobb is himself alone, and alone himself. He is nobody else, and nobody else is Sylvanus Cobb, Jr. We have heard of many people who each assumes, or permits it to be believed, that he is Sylvanus Cobb, Jr., and receives attentions and favors on that ground. But all such persons are either active or passive impostors. Mr. Cobb is a veritable flesh-and-blood reality, his renowned name being his own, and not a *nom de plume*.

M. M. W.—We have no recollection of the "poem" which you say you sent us. We never look at voluntary contributions, unless they consist of cash or drafts. If your poem came to this office, it was probably thrown aside with a score of other articles—that being about the number of such contributions which we daily receive, and which are unceremoniously sent to that bourne whence no contributions ever return

HENRY.—Cannot the mother of the young lady be conciliated? Perhaps a little delicate attention on the part of the daughter's lover, and a few presents adroitly made by him to his *wont*-be-mother-in-law, might lay the foundation for a better understanding between them, and open an avenue to her heart. If this can not be done, the young people should marry, as they are both of age, and effect a harmonious adjustment of matters afterwards.

YOUNG AMERICA.—It would not be becoming to ask a young lady while in church for her company home, but you could of course walk beside her to the door, and *then* ask her. Or, as the parents are willing that you should wait upon her, you could have it understood that you will *always* be her escort home, and thus head off "the crowd of unprincipled young men who line the way from the church door to the street."

C. B.—No. A man cannot be held to the fulfillment of a marriage engagement that was entered into before he was twenty-one, unless by some act or promise, done or made *after* he became of age, he renders it binding upon him. In the present case, you say the match was broken off while yet you were a minor, and that being the fact, you are safe from prosecution.

JULIE.—We see no reason why a gentleman is "in honor bound" to send a letter to a lady after he has sealed it and written her address upon it. If, after having done this, he should make up his mind not to send the letter, we think he would have a perfect right to retain or destroy it. We do not consider the playing at billiards a proper amusement for ladies.

STARBEAM, Baltimore.—You are right in supposing that we do not relish compliments and long-drawn encomiums. We relish brevity and directness in the communications of our friends, above all other qualities. The alteration to which you refer may at some future time be made, but we can now say nothing definite in regard to that subject.

ORPHAN'S FRIEND.—It is considered proper for a daughter in mourning for her father, to lay aside the sable weeds at the end of a year; and in some circles mourning is worn only six months.

KIRK.—In the LEDGER for March 14, 1857, you will find a full account of the way in which application must be made for an appointment to the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis.

FERULE.—The subject of "flogging in school" is such an important one, and the principles and interests involved are so various and of such magnitude, we do not care to make an attempt to apply them in a particular case, such as that of your son. It is certainly an imperative and fundamental necessity that order be maintained in school, and that pupils yield perfect obedience; and it is our opinion that the right kind of a teacher could secure these indispensable points without a resort to brute force, or flogging. One of the chief troubles in the case is the niggardly wages paid to teachers, and another difficulty is found in the fact that parents are so indifferent as to the character of the schools which their children attend. We do not think that General Jackson or Henry Clay, had they been school-teachers, would have had to resort to flogging in order to maintain order among their scholars. A glance of Old Hickory's eye would have secured more and better obedience and attention than any amount of young hickory applied to the backs of children, by some man whom nature intended for a butcher, rather than a teacher. He who has not the *gift of command* has no business at the head of a school, or anything else, but should occupy a subordinate position. When this point is once set right, school flagellations will cease, and probably not before. Until parents shall become liberal enough to pay master spirits for educating their children wisely and governing them humanely, they must, in too many instances, submit to have them educated in a hap-hazard manner, and governed, as brute beasts are governed, by fear and physical violence.

DOWNING.—The word "simoom" means *poison-wind*. The Turks call the same wind "samiel," which means the same as the Arabic "simoom." The simoom blows generally from the direction of the nearest sandy deserts; in Syria from those of Arabia, and in Egypt from those of Africa. Its effects are said sometimes to prove instantly fatal, the corpse being livid or black like a person blasted by lightning; at other times that it produces putrid fevers, which prove mortal in a few hours, and that very few who have been struck with it ever recover. The only protection which travelers in the desert have against the simoom, is that which is afforded by lying flat on the ground with the face downwards, and so suddenly does this terrible blast sometimes come, that even this poor protection is denied them.

A FATHER.—Any humane person would give you information concerning your son who knew of the circumstances, and had any knowledge of his whereabouts. If he goes by his true name, Edward Taylor Johnson, you can probably soon get trace of him. A lad only eleven years of age cannot be a very bad boy, and all the elements of goodness in his nature will combine to make him yearn for the endearments of home, and will, before long, turn his wandering footsteps thitherward. We hope that any reader of the LEDGER who meets with a light-haired, fair complexioned, full faced boy of the above mentioned name, will send word thereof to E. T. Johnson, at the Atlas office, New York.

M.—We think that a woman who enters into a marriage engagement with a person whom she has never seen, on the strength of his daguerreotype and the commendations of a friend, should suffer the consequences of such a foolish act. Of course, if on seeing her betrothed, she does not like him, it would be wrong for her to marry him; but having entered into the engagement, which cannot be broken without giving the gentleman pain and occasioning him many annoyances, she should be subjected to the penalty consequent upon an infraction of the contract. A marriage engagement is too solemn a thing to be entered into jestingly, or without due care and consideration.

JOSHUA wants to know if the nine digits can be so arranged that the columns and rows will add up *fifteen* whichever way the addition is made. Yes. This arrangement will accomplish it

2	9	4
7	5	3
6	1	8

You may add these columns or rows up any way you please, and each will make fifteen; you may add corner-wise, and the result will be the same.

KENOSHA.—Give the unsophisticated young man back his rings and daguerreotype. A young lady of proper delicacy and spirit would not wish to retain any man's or boy's rings and miniature against his will even though he had voluntarily thrust them upon her. So you had better return those in question, and perhaps you would also do the young man a service by cautioning him never again to attempt to play the part of a generous gallant. He is evidently unequal to the performance of such a part.

M. J. A., Richmond.—Government lands are sold at $1 25 an acre, cash down. There are no ticket offices in Baltimore, Philadelphia or New York where you can get tickets at less than the regular rates of fare charged by the railroad companies. Everybody who offers to sell you tickets at such reduced rates are swindlers. Have nothing to do with them, but go to the regular ticket office, or else you will be cheated out of your money.

A NEW YORK GIRL.—Of course you should not go to California with the young gentleman, unless he marries you before you set out. You must be exceedingly simple to think of such a thing for a moment. Nor should you attempt to deceive your father in regard to the matter. Tell him all about the engagement, and solicit his advice and parental guidance.

SWIMMER.—It makes but little difference what time of day you take a bath, or what time of the year. The chief point of caution is the temperature of the body. When you are heated or perspiring, it will not do to plunge into a bath, or to go in swimming; you must then wait till you have become cool, and the excitement of the body has been allayed.

J. E. D.—You put too many titles to the address. You should omit either the "Mr." or the "Esq." The use of either one would be correct, but to sandwich a man between the two would be spreading on the courtesy altogether too liberally. "Mr. John Smith," or "John Smith, Esq.," will answer, but "Mr. John Smith, Esq.," is ridiculous.

JENKINSON.—No. The Emperor of Russia has not yet abolished serfdom throughout his dominions, but he and his high officers of state are discussing the question, and attempting to devise some plan for freeing all the serfs in the empire. It is a stupendous undertaking and cannot be accomplished hastily.

ELLA.—It is well enough for you to admire Napoleon and weep over his desolate fate at St. Helena, but you are mistaken as to his regard and respect for women. He thought poorly of them, and treated them very rudely. In some cases he was exceedingly harsh and tyrannical towards them.

HALE.—It is customary to introduce a gentleman *to* a lady, and not the lady to the gentleman. In introducing two men, the younger is introduced to the elder, or the inferior to the superior. You can get back numbers of the LEDGER containing any story published since June 7th, 1856.

CATARACT.—We should say that it would be rather a dubious compliment to a young lady to name a drinking saloon after her; and it is our opinion that no right-minded girl would feel flattered by such a "bad distinction." Girls and liquor make an unpleasant association.

BEATRICE.—A lady has a right to select and discontinue her acquaintanceships at her own will and pleasure. If she thinks she has sufficient reason to "cut" an acquaintance, she of course has a right to do so; but, at the same time, she must expect to receive "cuts" in return.

O.—If the young lady and her parents are willing you should "keep late hours" with the former, your doing so is merely a question of prudence. We think that "late hours" are bad in every respect, and should not be kept for any purpose when they can possibly be avoided.

CORRESPONDENTS must use good ink and write in a legible hand. Many letters are written with such pale ink, or in such a fine, indistinct hand, that no one could decipher them without injury to his eyesight. All such letters are of course thrown aside without examination.

IRA B.—We have not time to write private letters to you and other admirers of the LEDGER, however much we might be inclined to do so. We cannot say whether the exhibition of a petrified human body would pay or not. You had better consult Barnum.

SERENADE.—It is not obligatory on a person who is serenaded to invite the serenaders into the house and give them refreshments. That would sometimes be paying too dearly for the honor of the music.

H. S.—We thank our correspondent for his communication, and are gratified to find the LEDGER continues to increase the number of its friends, and to commend itself to the wise and good.

AUGUSTUS.—By going to any first class jeweler's to buy a watch you will get the worth of your money—that is, you will get a good watch at a fair price. Do not buy a cheap article; if you do, you will be apt to get cheated.

L. K.—You are mistaken. Franklin was not an infidel. He had some peculiar views on minor theological points, but on all the great, fundamental truths of religion he was sound to the core.

SNOW-DROP.—We differ in opinion with you. We think it is improper for a man to use profane language under any circumstances whatever.

CLARA.—We do not believe in masked balls. They are under the bann of respectable society, and we are of the opinion that no virtuous woman would attend one.

TRAVELER.—You write an excellent letter for a boy, but the information you desire we cannot give.

T. J. M.—If you *think* it is sinful to play the organ in church for hire, you should not do so.

SAILOR BOY.—You would do better by obeying your mother and staying at home than by going to sea.

WEST END.—No title page or table of contents for the LEDGER is ever published.

G. C B.—We think a man would be very foolish to select a wife from among actresses, unless he were himself an actor.

*** *Several letters stand over to be answered in our next.*